Entertainment / A2-1

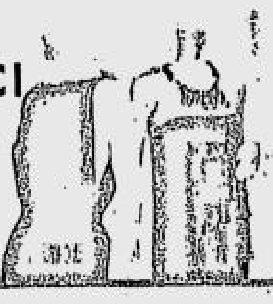
A 'woman of courage, dignity'

World / A11

Cloned cat sells for $50,000

Lifestyle / C1

The designer who loves women



Sports / A21

Pacquiao, HBO agree on terms of rematch

Across / A17

Most powerful man in Subic port?

Mike A's wishes: unity, happiness, grandchild

SANTA! GUSTO PANG MAGKA APO NI LOLO!

By Gil Cabacungan Jr.

NATIONAL unity, happiness for the President and another grandchild—this time—from only daughter Luli. These are the three Christmas wishes of First

MIKE A's/ A8

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Friday, December 24, 2004 ★★ 60 pages / 7 sections / Vol. 20 / No. 16 P18

MERRY CHRISTMAS?

	2002	2003	2004
Happy ☺	82%	77%	64%
Sad ☹	3%	4%	10%
Neither 😐	15%	20%	26%

Source: SWS

SHARE-A-CAROL
President Macapagal-Arroyo spreads the holiday cheers as she joins children in singing Christmas carols during a gift-giving affair held in Malacañang. EDWIN BACASMAS

Christmas merry to 2/3 of Filipinos

Poll notes decrease in optimism

'TIS SUPPOSED to be the season to be jolly, but fewer adult Filipinos are looking forward to a merry Christmas tomorrow than those in the two Christmases past, according to results of a survey by a private polling group.

Social Weather Stations said yesterday the proportion of Filipinos expecting a happy Christmas fell to 64 percent this year from 77 percent in 2003 and 82 percent in 2002.

The survey covered 1,200 respondents nationwide and was conducted from Nov. 23 to Dec. 2, 2004. It had a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level.

SWS said 10 percent of the respondents were expecting a sad Christmas this year, up from 3 to 4 percent in 2002-2003, while the number of those who said that they were neither happy nor sad jumped to 26 percent from 20 percent in 2003 and 15 percent in 2002.

The polling group noted a decline in the proportion of Filipinos expecting a happy Christmas across all demographic groups since 2002.

The decline came as about half of the respondents (48 percent) said their quality of life worsened this year from a year ago. Nineteen percent said their quality of life improved, while the rest said it did not change.

Nevertheless, sociologist Randy David said two out of three Filipinos looking forward to a happy Christmas was still "pretty high."

"I expected a much lower figure. Maybe, one out of three Filipinos (looking forward to a happy Christmas)," he said.

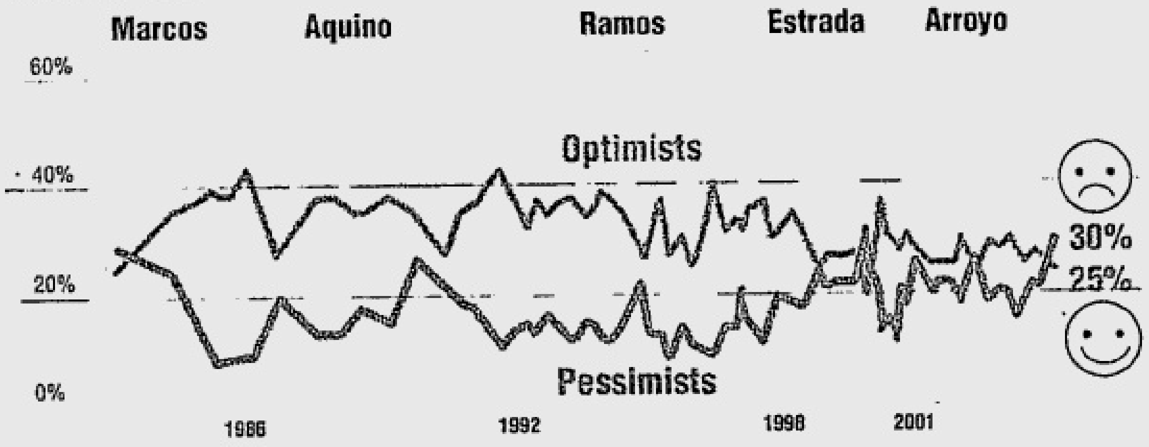
Most Filipinos equate happiness with family, and not material objects, according to David.

"*Simple lang talaga ang kaligayahan ng mga Filipino* (Filipinos have very simple joys),"

CHRISTMAS/ A8

Expected change in quality of life

Apr 1984 - Dec 2004



SOURCE: Social Weather Stations

INQGRAPH: LA MISTADES

Sandigan resets Erap departure for Dec. 26

By Armand N. Nocum

DISREGARDING the prosecution's objections, the Sandiganbayan yesterday rescheduled on Sunday ousted President Joseph Estrada's date of departure for Hong Kong where he would undergo knee surgery.

Three justices of the five-member special Sandiganbayan division trying the plunder charges against Estrada approved a resolution allowing the deposed President to undergo medical treatment in Hong Kong from Dec. 26 to Jan. 15 next year.

Estrada, who was ousted in massive anticorruption protests in 2001 and put on trial later that year, initially got clearance from the Sandiganbayan to leave for Hong Kong on Dec. 19. He decided to forego his departure so he could attend on Tuesday midnight the necrological services of actor Fernando Poe Jr., who lost to President Macapagal-Arroyo in the May elections.

Estrada, who has been placed

SANDIGAN/ A8

Opposition senators mock oust-GMA plot

By Michael Lim Ubac, Luige A. del Puerto and TJ Burgonio

OPPOSITION senators yesterday laughed off the claim of Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez that a plot to oust President Macapagal-Arroyo was to be implemented within 48 hours after the Wednesday burial of Fernando Poe Jr.

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said the only plot the opposition knew of was that in the North Cemetery where Poe was laid to rest.

"It is pure hogwash. It is a takeoff from a Harry Potter plot and has no bearing with reality. It is a product of a feverish imagination," Pimentel said of the alleged planned civilian-military junta of which Poe's widow, Susan Roces, was supposedly to be installed as figurehead to replace Ms Arroyo.

Contacted for comment, Susan Tagle, the Poe family's key media officer, was livid.

"What I have to say is this," Tagle said on the phone. "If the administration and [its] security and intelligence forces are afraid

OPPOSITION/ A18

FERNANDO POE

SUPPORTERS of the late Fernando Poe Jr. find it difficult to bid goodbye to their idol a day after his burial at the Manila North Cemetery. ERIK ARAZAS

Guinness lists RP for mass aerobics

By Blanche S. Rivera

THE PHILIPPINES scored another spot in the Guinness Book of World Records as host of the world's largest aerobics demonstration/class.

After verifying the feat for more than a year, the Guinness Book of World Records has authenticated and recognized the mass exercise at the Quirino Grandstand in Manila on Feb. 16, 2003 as the world's biggest gathering for an aerobics class.

The class gathered 48,188 participants from government agencies, private companies and nongovernment organizations who came as early as 5 a.m. Led by Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit, they exercised for about three hours.

Sophie Whiting of the Guinness World Records Ltd. sent a letter dated Nov. 30 and a copy of the certificate to Dayrit saying that the Philippines had been "successful in setting a new world record under the category of

GUINNESS/ A18

Bishops urge prayers for abusive leaders 'who need true recovery'

By Blanche S. Rivera

WITH Christmas only a day away, the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines is calling on the people to pray not only for the poor in resources but also for the morally bankrupt.

Unlike the families who were rendered homeless and impoverished by the recent storms, those who abuse their authority are the ones who need true recovery, according to Fernando Capalla, CBCP president and archbishop of Davao.

"Our divisive electoral exercise within our already hurtful politics, and the sad tragedies inflicted by the killer Typhoons 'Winnie' and 'Yoyong,' strongly call for a rediscovery of the true meaning of Christmas," Capalla said in a Christmas message released by the CBCP.

"Our gift-giving this year must focus on both the victims of disasters and calamities, and those who, by misusing and abusing their power, authority and influence, are morally impoverished and spiritually starved," he said.

Capalla, known for his advocacy of reconciliation between Christians and Muslims and among rivals in government, said Christmas was a time to remember that everyone had a common origin and a common destiny.

"God the Creator became human ... to assure us that this common destiny is possible. He demonstrated this possibility by showing us that giving something, especially oneself, without counting the cost ... is the most humane way of living in community. This is the true meaning of Christmas," he said.

Capalla said it was imperative for all Filipinos to help one another, to promote a more humane society. He said there was still hope even for those who misuse their power.

"Because of the inherent goodness in all of us, which is never canceled out by sin or crime, there is hope for their reform and restoration into our human and

BISHOPS/ A8

Local body to decide payment for Naia-3 builders

A PHILIPPINE court-appointed commission will decide on compensation owed to a consortium, including Germany's Fraport AG, for a $650-million airport terminal built by the group but taken over by the government on Tuesday, Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza said yesterday.

Mendoza brushed aside charges by Fraport that the expropriation broke the law and rejected its demands that the government should pay a minimum of 350 million euros ($465 million) for the still-unused terminal.

"The court will form a commission with three members to determine the just compensation for Piatco," Mendoza said, referring to the Philippine International Air Terminals Co., the consortium which built the terminal.

Piatco is 30-percent owned by Fraport, which operates Frankfurt's airport.

Mendoza said the Department of Transportation and Communication (DOTC) "recognizes the right of Piatco for a just compensation and will do so after a competent court has determined its real market value."

But he also stressed that "the DOTC has to strike a balance between upholding the interest of investors and protecting national interest."

"In this particular case, the DOTC has reached the limit of its tolerance. The DOTC will not allow anybody to make the public a hostage," Mendoza said.

Mendoza hoped the new terminal at Manila's international airport would be operational within six months.

The government said Tuesday that it would take over the terminal and offered a P3-billion ($53.57 million) down payment to Piatco as compensation.

But the consortium accused

LOCAL BODY/ A18

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Southern Visayas and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers.
SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

COMPILED BY: CHONA GALANG, PDI RESEARCH/12/24/04

2 Pinoys among 69 hurt in Iraq bombing

TWO FILIPINOS were among the 69 people wounded in the blast at a US military base in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul, the Foreign Affairs Department said Thursday as other Filipinos sought to leave the area.

The two Filipino civilian workers were wounded in the blast that killed 22 people at a US military dining hall. They are in stable condition and receiving care at a US military hospital, the department said in a statement.

In the wake of the blast, 20 of the Filipino civilian workers on the base asked to be repatriated and 14 have, since been flown out to Adana, Turkey, by a Turkish subcontractor. They will later be flown to Manila, the department said in a statement.

Separately, Labor Secretary Patricia Santo Tomas expressed optimism that a Filipino worker held hostage by Iraqi militants would be freed before year's end.

"Although I cannot discuss the finer points of the negotiations with the kidnappers, we are hoping that (the hostage Roberto) Tarongoy will be released before new year," Santo Tomas said.

Tarongoy, an accountant, was kidnapped along with an American, a Nepalese and three Iraqis on Nov. 1.

The Nepalese and Iraqis have since been freed but Tarongoy and the American have remained in captivity. *AFP*

'BOOGIE TIME'

52 cops leave Pacer

By Christian V. Esguerra

AT LEAST 52 policemen left the Philippine National Police's anti-kidnapping group for another unit because they apparently didn't want to work under Senior Supt. Rodolfo "Boogie" Mendoza.

The officers of the Police Anti-Crime Emergency Response (Pacer) transferred to the National Anti-Smuggling Task Force days before Mendoza was designated Pacer chief.

Mendoza yesterday confirmed the departure which he said had taken effect before he assumed office on Dec. 14.

"They sought permission to be transferred before I came," he said in a telephone interview.

Asked what might have driven the former Pacer men to leave, he said: "I have no record of being rejected by my men."

The departure threatened to jeopardize ongoing operations.

At the time of the exodus, the unit had just worked on a case that had taken place five days earlier, the INQUIRER learned.

Another case is that of businessman Norman Sia, who was abducted by suspected Pentagon gang members in Mindanao last year.

"Admittedly, there are vacuums in certain divisions," Mendoza said. "But I don't think our operations will be compromised. It all depends on the cooperation and dedication of those who decided to stay."

He said he was now requesting more policemen to fill the vacancies.

It was not clear what the 52 former Pacer men didn't like in particular about Mendoza, one of the busiest officials under the term of PNP chief Edgar Aglipay.

Mendoza got the coveted Pacer post on top of his being deputy director of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG).

Cops guard FPJ tomb at North Cemetery 24/7

To protect fans and deter vandals–WPD chief

By Leila B. Salaverria and Tarra V. Quismundo

MOST of the fans and supporters of Fernando Poe Jr. have gone home, but police stand guard over the tomb of the actor who has gained iconic status after his death.

Western Police District Chief Supt. Pedro Bulaong said operatives had been assigned to the Manila North Cemetery in case there would be attempts to defile Poe's final resting place.

"There are policemen on watch 24 hours a day at the North Cemetery, especially since there are still a lot of fans visiting the king of Philippine movies," he said over radio station dzBB.

In a phone interview, Bulaong said the number of supporters who visited Poe's grave yesterday was much less than those who attended his burial. But the police, he added, were not taking any chances and would still be monitoring the crowd.

Around a million people showed up for Poe's Dec. 22 burial, which was preceded by a 6.5-km funeral procession from Sto. Domingo Church where the wake was held.

Bulaong said the WPD also wanted to protect Poe's supporters against anyone who would want to start trouble at the cemetery.

On the day of the actor's burial, several people reportedly lost their cell phones, wallets and bags. Police had earlier warned that thieves would probably take advantage of the large crowds and rob mourners.

Bulaong added that the WPD wanted to make sure that no trouble would erupt in the 54-hectare cemetery which is also the final resting place of a number of past presidents and cultural icons.

Anticipating the large volume of trash mourners would leave behind, some 110 DPS personnel and street sweepers were deployed by Manila's Department of Public Service on the day of Poe's much-attended funeral.

Sure enough, they left a trail of trash—styrofoam food containers, plastic cups and paper—on the thoroughfares Poe's funeral march passed. This included España Boulevard, the streets of A.H. Lacson and Dimasalang, and within the Manila North Cemetery itself, according to Manila's DPS chief Rafael Borromeo.

A few hours after Poe was laid to rest, the DPS started to clean up.

"We waited until most of the people had left the cemetery. We cleaned from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m." said Borromeo.

He estimated that a truckload of trash was collected inside the North Cemetery, and another truckload of garbage was picked up along the roads where thousands marched.

Borromeo added that FPJ volunteers also helped tidy up the cemetery, picking up the flowers and wreaths sent to the Poe family.

Sorry, no bonus this year for 115,000 policemen

By Christian V. Esguerra

SORRY, boys, no Christmas bonus this year.

Citing hard times, Philippine National Police Director General Edgar Aglipay broke the bad news to the PNP's 115,000 officers during a thanksgiving Mass at Camp Crame the other day.

In the past, policemen received a P5,000 Christmas bonus. But the amount cannot be given this year because of the bad economic situation, Senior Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil, PNP spokesperson, said yesterday.

The announcement was anything but good news to police officers who had been given strict orders to refrain from Christmas "solicitations."

Aglipay also canceled the PNP's Christmas party and opted to donate the budget allocated for it to typhoon victims. But he threw a Christmas party for media people covering the PNP at his Camp Crame residence last Friday.

At the height of the financial crisis months ago, Aglipay urged his men to donate a day's salary to the national treasury. It is not clear what came out of the effort.

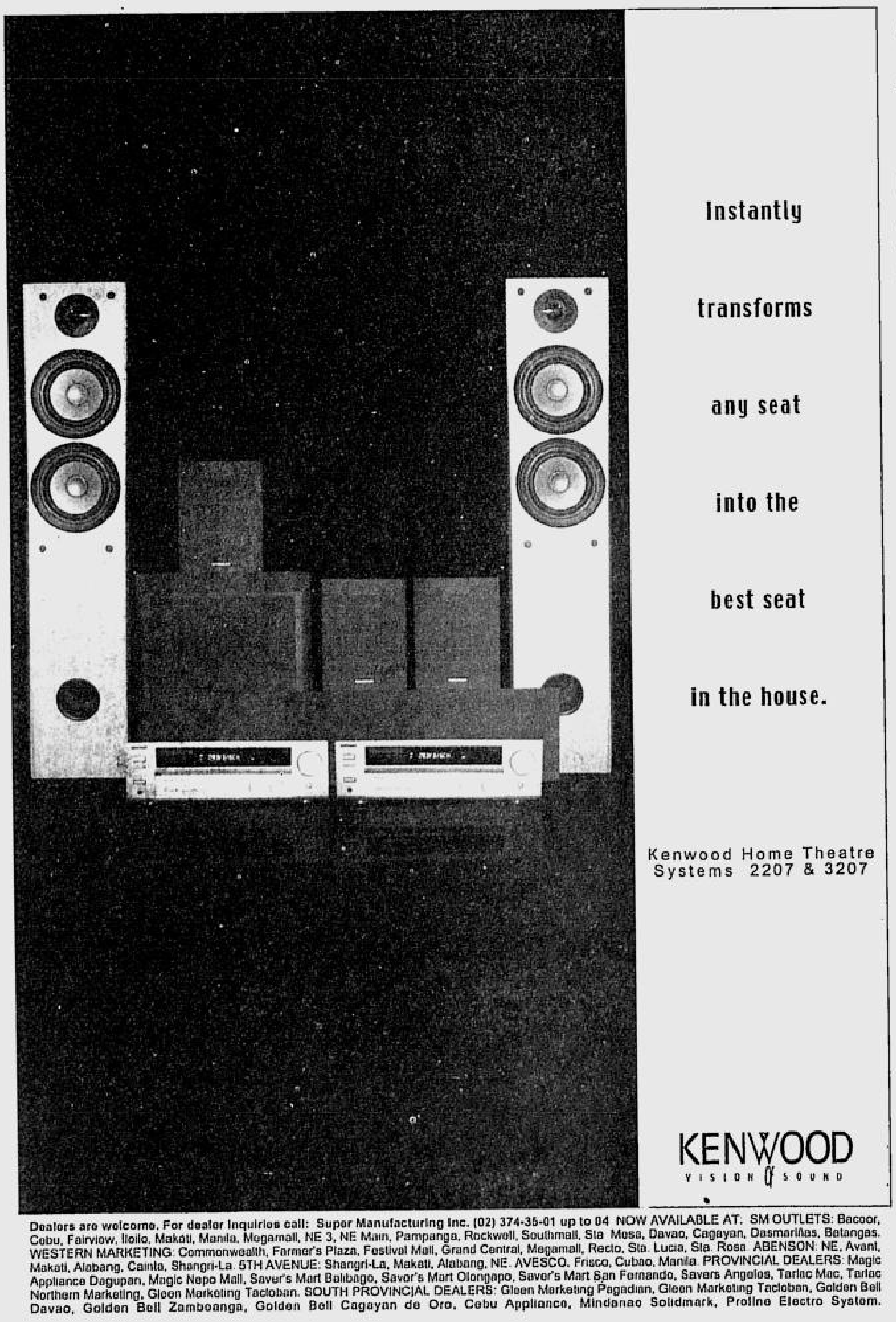
Instead of the Christmas bonus, Bataoil said the PNP leadership would hand out P2,400 in cash to each policeman representing his "medical support" for three quarters.

"We're hoping that the economy will improve next year so the PNP can give more benefits," he said.

Bataoil said the PNP was expecting to save more from its annual budget with the "institutionalized structural reforms" Aglipay had begun implementing in the corruption-prone procurement system.

The reforms got a boost from the commitment given by bishops and the Makati Business Club who joined the PNP in a "coalition against corruption" during rites at Camp Crame last Monday, the spokesperson said.

"With the reforms that we have been implementing, we hope to have more savings that will benefit our policemen," he said.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Oil firms cut gas prices by 30¢ to 35¢ per liter

By Abigail L. Ho

OIL FIRMS have provided the public with an unexpected but welcome Christmas cheer: They reduced, or are set to cut, gasoline prices from between 30 centavos and 35 centavos a liter.

Independent oil firm Flying V was first to implement a rollback of 35 centavos a liter on its gasoline products effective 12:01 a.m. yesterday.

Eastern Petroleum Corp., another new oil player, followed suit at 12 noon yesterday with a 30 centavo-a-liter price reduction. Seaoil Petroleum Corp. implemented similar reductions at 10 p.m. yesterday.

The four biggest oil firms, Petron Corp., Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp., Caltex Philippines Inc. and Total (Philippines) Corp. all reduced the prices of their gasoline products by 30 centavos a liter at 12:01 a.m. today.

Officials of new player Unioil Petroleum Philippines Inc. were still discussing a price cut as of press time. Should they decide on a rollback, it would likely take effect at 12 noon today.

The oil companies all cited improved market conditions and competitive market forces as their reason for the price cuts.

The benchmark Dubai crude fell to a Dec. 1-22 average of $34.33 a barrel from last month's $34.87.

The price of unleaded gasoline based on the Mean of Platts Singapore (MOPS) benchmark for refined petroleum products also declined to $45.30 a barrel this month, from $52.44 last month.

MOPS-based diesel fuel, while still registering a high price, also posted a lower price of $52.06 a barrel in the Dec. 1-22 period as compared with $56.02 in November.

Independent oil firm PTT Philippines Corp. cut prices of its gasoline and diesel fuel last week by 50 centavos a liter.

Earlier in the week, Petron, Shell, Caltex, Total and Pryce Gases Inc. also reduced prices of their cooking gas by P1 a kilogram or by P11 a cylinder.

Despite these price reductions, industry executives agreed that it was still difficult to speculate on whether the downtrend in prices would continue, especially since price spikes in the world market usually occur in January and early February because of higher spending for heating in industrialized countries.

Gov't not giving up in Journal fight

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

THE GOVERNMENT is not about to give up the Philippine Journalists Inc. (PJI) without a fight.

The Presidential Commission on Good Government yesterday indicated it would block what it called the "arbitrary" turnover of the newspaper publishing firm to alleged dummies of Ferdinand Marcos's brother-in-law, Benjamin "Kokoy" Romualdez.

It said the Sandiganbayan violated the government's right to due process when it carried out last Tuesday the Supreme Court's Dec. 14 order to return the sequestered PJI to its former owners.

"The taking over of PJI management was arbitrary and a gross violation of the constitutional guarantee of due process, as the control and management of a company is vested in its duly-elected and constituted Board of Directors," the PCGG said in a statement.

"The order of the Supreme Court dated Dec. 14 was arbitrarily implemented by the Sandiganbayan on Dec. 21, without first hearing the solicitor general who filed his comment/opposition to the writ of immediate execution filed by former PJI majority stockholder Rosario Olivares," the PCGG went on.

The PCGG said Sandiganbayan Sheriff Ed Urieta "arbitrarily" served the writ of execution on Malacañang-appointed PJI publisher Roberto Capco Tuesday without first giving the PCGG, the Asset Privatization Trust and the Office of the Solicitor General a copy of the Sandiganbayan resolution ordering PJI's return to Olivares and her group.

The PCGG in 1986 sequestered PJI on the suspicion that it was part of the ill-gotten wealth of Romualdez.

While the forfeiture case against Romualdez remains pending before the Sandiganbayan, PJI's shares of stock have since been turned over to the APT.

The high court has ordered the government to return PJI to its former owners as soon as they have paid the P33 million balance of PJI's government loan back in 1977.

PJI shares of stock were used as collateral for the loan.

In its statement, the PCGG argued that the SC in effect condoned PJI's over P600 million outstanding loans, which according to the PCGG, the high court had no authority to do.

"The condonation of P643 million is not only unconscionable but an unlawful reduction of a debt to the impoverishment of government," said the PCGG.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

CA paves way for court to assess genuineness of Marcos' last will

By TJ Burgonio

THE COURT of Appeals has junked former first lady Imelda Marcos' appeal to overturn a regional trial court's ruling in connection with the last will and testament of the late President Ferdinand Marcos.

The CA's Seventh Division, chaired by Associate Justice Portia Aliño-Hormachuelos, upheld the Jan. 11, 1996 order issued by the Pasig Regional Trial Court allowing the late president's last will and testament to probate.

Probate refers to the process of proving before a tribunal the genuineness of a document offered for official recognition and registration as the last will and testament of a deceased person.

The appellate court ruled that the trial court's finding on the existence and due execution of the last will and testament should be upheld "in the absence of evidence that the last will and testament of decedent was destroyed..."

In her appeal, Ms Marcos had argued that the local court erred in approving the probate of her late husband's will, saying the government failed to present the original of the last will and testament in court.

She had further argued there was legal presumption that her husband was deemed to have revoked his will if the original could not be found after his death.

"If a party petitioning for the allowance of a will presents evidence that a will was indeed executed, the party opposing the probate cannot merely rely on such a presumption," the court said in its 19-page ruling.

Marcos, who was exiled to Hawaii after he was toppled from power by a people's revolt in February 1986, left a last will and testament when he died on Sept. 28, 1989, records showed.

The will, which was executed in Hawaii on June 23, 1998, named Imelda and son Ferdinand Jr. as executors. When he died, Marcos left pieces of property valued at P24 million, excluding the alleged ill-gotten wealth.

The government had filed a forfeiture case before the Sandiganbayan, seeking to recover P125 billion of Marcos' alleged ill-gotten wealth.

It later petitioned the local court in Pasig City to allow Marcos' last will and testament to probate if found to be valid and authentic.

The appellate court also disputed Ms Marcos' contention that the government has no personality to file a petition to allow the will to probate.

"The material and direct interest of petitioner Republic in the estate of the decedent at the time of the petition was filed on Oct. 16, 1992 in the form of claims for estate and income taxes has already been recognized in the case of Marcos II vs Court of Appeals," it said.

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MITSUBISHI MOTORS

Images of pain haunt S. Leyte landslide victims

PANAON ISLAND, Southern Leyte—Florie Anajao won't watch or listen to news about the flash floods that killed hundreds of people in Luzon.

"The images of pain we saw on TV and the reports we heard over the radio (remind us of) the tragedy that devastated us a year ago ... We saw ourselves in that Luzon devastation," said Anajao, village chief of Pinut-an in San Ricardo town.

Anajao recalled how he was able to bring his family to safety in the nick of time before his house was swept by floodwaters.

On Dec. 19, 2003, more than 150 people were killed when mud and flood fell from the mountains and crashed into the homes of sleeping people in Pinut-an and in Barangays Punta in San Francisco and Poblacion in Liloan town.

The three towns are on Panaon Island, which is connected to mainland Southern Leyte through the Liloan Bridge.

The Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) ruled out illegal logging as the cause of the tragedy, saying the island had long been deforested.

Instead, MGB experts pointed at excessive rainfall, land conversion and geological terrain as the culprits. Water equivalent to three months of rain under normal conditions had loosened the earth and mud.

Panaon, once a forested area, was converted into an agricultural land. The reclassified lands were mostly planted with coconut trees, which could not hold earth unlike forest trees.

The island also has a "fractured" soil that allows rainwater to seep in and "lubricate" the underlying rocks. When the area becomes saturated with water, the soil slides down.

Help and missed targets

With the influx of donors who wanted to help the victims, Gov. Rosette Lerias formed Oplan Bagong Panaon (OBP) on Jan. 1, 2004, a task force to oversee relief and rehabilitation efforts for the victims.

"What we wanted is to have a (complete) community for the victims, not only houses to live in," Lerias said.

But the OBP has been missing its targets.

Part of the plan is to rehabilitate the areas hit by landslides by covering these with coconut husks made into fiber and by planting 200,000 seedlings of different tree species to hold the soil whenever it rains.

So far, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources has managed to plant only about 20,000 seedlings, or 10 percent of the target, which were shipped from Davao.

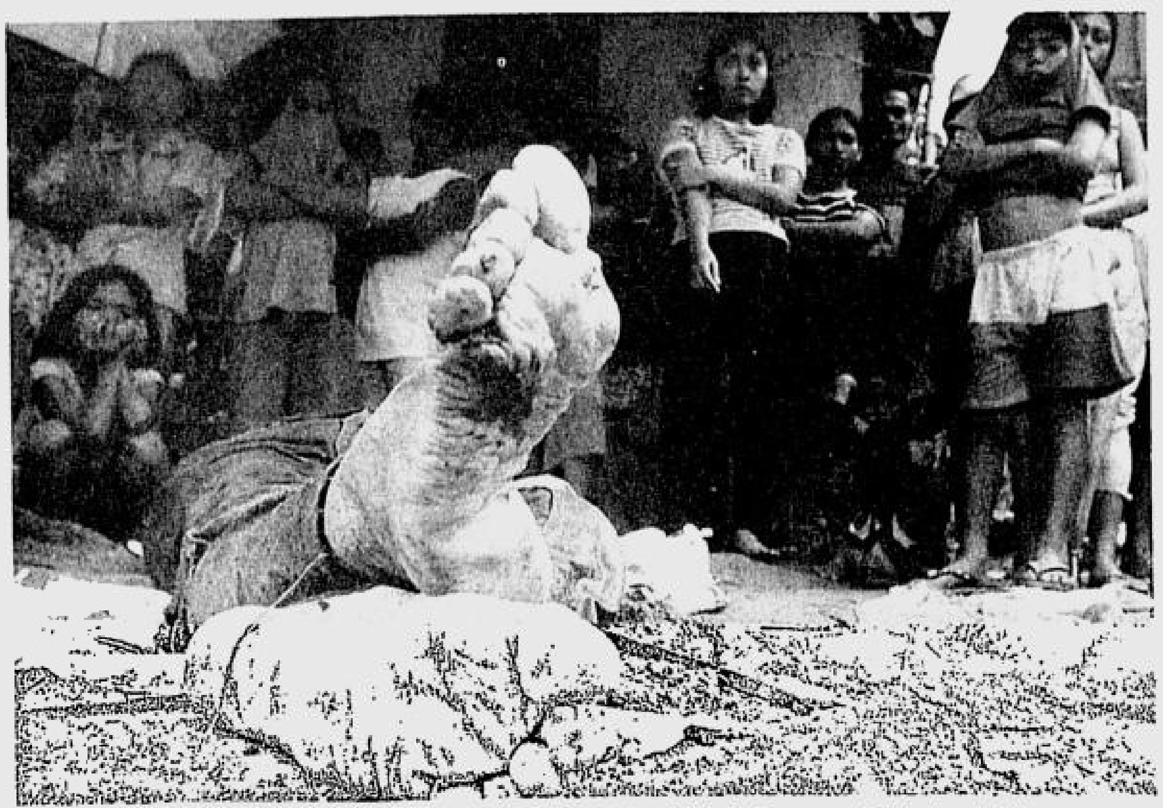
The OBP also failed to meet its June 30 deadline to build four relocation sites in Anilao, Liloan; Barangay Central, San Francisco; and Pinut-an and Esperanza in San Ricardo.

A few days into the anniversary of the tragedy, only a little less than 100 families have transferred to their new homes. Two hundred more have yet to be relocated.

The OBP has listed three reasons it failed to meet the June 30 deadline.

One was the difficulty of bringing in construction materials to the relocation sites due to bad roads caused by the landslides.

The OBP also had difficulty in negotiating for relocation sites, particularly in Anilao. Only 10 units of duplex houses were built in Anilao following the collapse of negotiations on the acquisition of an adjacent lot in the relocation site.



FILE photo shows an unidentified body recovered from a landslide in Barangay Poblacion in Liloan, Southern Leyte.

TONEE DESPOJO/CEBU DAILY NEWS FILE PHOTO

The landowners jacked up the price from the agreed amount of P100,000 to P400,000 because they wanted a higher valuation of the property.

Liloan Mayor Marlo Maamo told the INQUIRER that funds had already been deposited as payment for the land. But after the negotiations collapsed, the provincial board initiated expropriation proceedings for the 50 remaining duplexes.

So far, only 20 families have been relocated. The remaining 100 families are living in their homes in Barangay Poblacion, where 19 people were buried alive in the mudslide.

Ironically, the Anilao site saw the first concerted effort of different heads of offices, civic and nongovernment organizations and the Diocese of Maasin, all members of the OBP, volunteering to build houses in a series of "provincial build" initiated by the provincial government.

Under the provincial build scheme, each department of the provincial government builds one house in the relocation site.

Ma. Glendora Indulan-Hale, Liloan municipal social welfare officer, said those relocated were very happy. The residents, she added, are into fishing and farming.

Far from work

Another reason the target was missed was the refusal of some families to leave their homes because the proposed relocation sites were far from their sources of livelihood.

The toughest resistance came from residents in San Ricardo, who are mostly fishermen and farmers and whose homes devastated by the floods were near the sea and their farms.

The relocation site in Pinut-an is about 1.5 km uphill from where they used to live. Ezperanza, on the other hand, is 4 km from Pinut-an.

They were not also happy that there were two relocation sites in San Ricardo.

Anajao said even San Ricardo Mayor Virginia Mejia resented the idea of separating her constituents from one another and from their place of birth.

"If they want us relocated, they should find ways for us to be together again," Anajao said, quoting the mayor as telling provincial and Red Cross officials.

He said they sympathized with Mejia, who had not fully recovered from the loss of her husband, then Mayor Vicente Mejia, who was swept by floodwaters while trying to help children cross a bridge to safety.

"But the residents really needed to transfer to safer areas because every time it rains, we practically scamper to safer ground," said Anajao, adding that they have developed a fear of rain.

He said the relocation site put up by the Couples for Christ's Gawad Kalinga in Pinut-an could only accommodate 100 houses for the more than 200 families that need to be transferred.

More than 100 families more would have to be moved from their current location to Esperanza, which is being run by the Federation of International Red Cross (FIRC). Both the CFC and the FIRC belong to the OBP.

Anajao said the FIRC gave them until this month to decide whether to avail themselves of the relocation sites because its work on the village would end by then.

Happy to leave

But the residents of Punta have no qualms about leaving their homes.

The village was the worst hit in the mudslides. Two landslides reduced Punta to debris, leaving more than 100 dead and missing. More than 100 houses were either damaged or destroyed.

The Philippine National Red Cross provided the materials for the 97 houses in the relocation site in Central, San Francisco.

So far, 87 families have been transferred. The others were living with relatives while waiting for the construction of the 10 remaining houses.

Municipal social worker Lydia Tablo said the affected families didn't want to return to Punta.

She said nobody from the village accepted the offer of Ital-Thai construction firm to work as security guards in the company bunkhouse in the landslide-stricken area. The firm won the contract to concrete the 39-km road that connects Liloan to San Ricardo.

Punta has become a ghost barangay. What the killer mudslide spared in the area has remained as it is. Houses were abandoned even if some of these are intact.

Barangay chair Ricky Subang complained that he had no more village to run because most of his constituents are now residents of Central.

Subang, who now lives with his family at the site, remains optimistic that the government will help them. "We hope we could rebuild our lives here," he said.

Tablo said Punta residents had returned to farming and fishing and the United Nations Development Program even provided them with 40 fishing boats.

She, however, said the families are worried of the rainwater that accumulates on a slope passing through the site.

She said things were running smoothly, "except when they are really hard up, they ask rice from us."

Although struggling to recover from the trauma, the people try to live normal lives in the relocation sites.

On the tragedy's first anniversary, the residents held Masses—the first one will be in Pinut-an, then in Punta and in Poblacion.

But for Anajao, not much has changed since Dec. 19, except for the prospect of a new house.

"The government could only do so much. We have to move on our own or we would die hungry with our eyes open," he said. *Jani Arnaiz, PDI Visayas Bureau*

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Friday, December 24, 2004
4th Week of Advent

1st Reading: 2 S 7:1-5, 8-11, 16
Gospel: Lk 1:67-79

Zechariah, filled with holy spirit, sang this canticle,
"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,
for he has come and redeemed his people.
He has raised up for us a victorious Savior
in the house of David his servant,
as he promised through his prophets of old,
salvation from our enemies
and from the hand of our foes.
He has shown mercy to our fathers
and remembered his holy covenant,
the oath he swore to Abraham, our father,
to deliver us from the enemy,
that we might serve him fearlessly
as a holy and righteous people
all the days of our lives.
And you, my child,
shall be called prophet of the Most High,
for you shall go before the Lord
to prepare the way for him
and enable his people to know of their salvation
when he comes to forgive their sins.
This is the work of the mercy of our God,
who comes from on high as a rising sun
shining on those who live in darkness
and in the shadow of death,
and guiding our feet into the way of peace."

Commentary

Zechariah's great canticle is a song of praise. How refreshing an atmosphere praise creates! And there is no violence just behind his praise, as there often is in the Psalms: the Psalm that begins so beautifully, "Sing a new song to the Lord," says, ten lines later, "Let the praise of God be on their lips and a two-edged sword in their hand to deal out vengeance to the nations..." But in Zechariah there is none of this. There's no second side to him. He's the right one to lead us to the crib of the Prince of Peace.

Why not compose your own Benedictus canticle this evening?—a whole-hearted expression of praise and thanks for all that has been: for God's providence over your life and your family; for the grace of Christ living in you; for the gift of perseverance; for having been guided into the Way of Peace.

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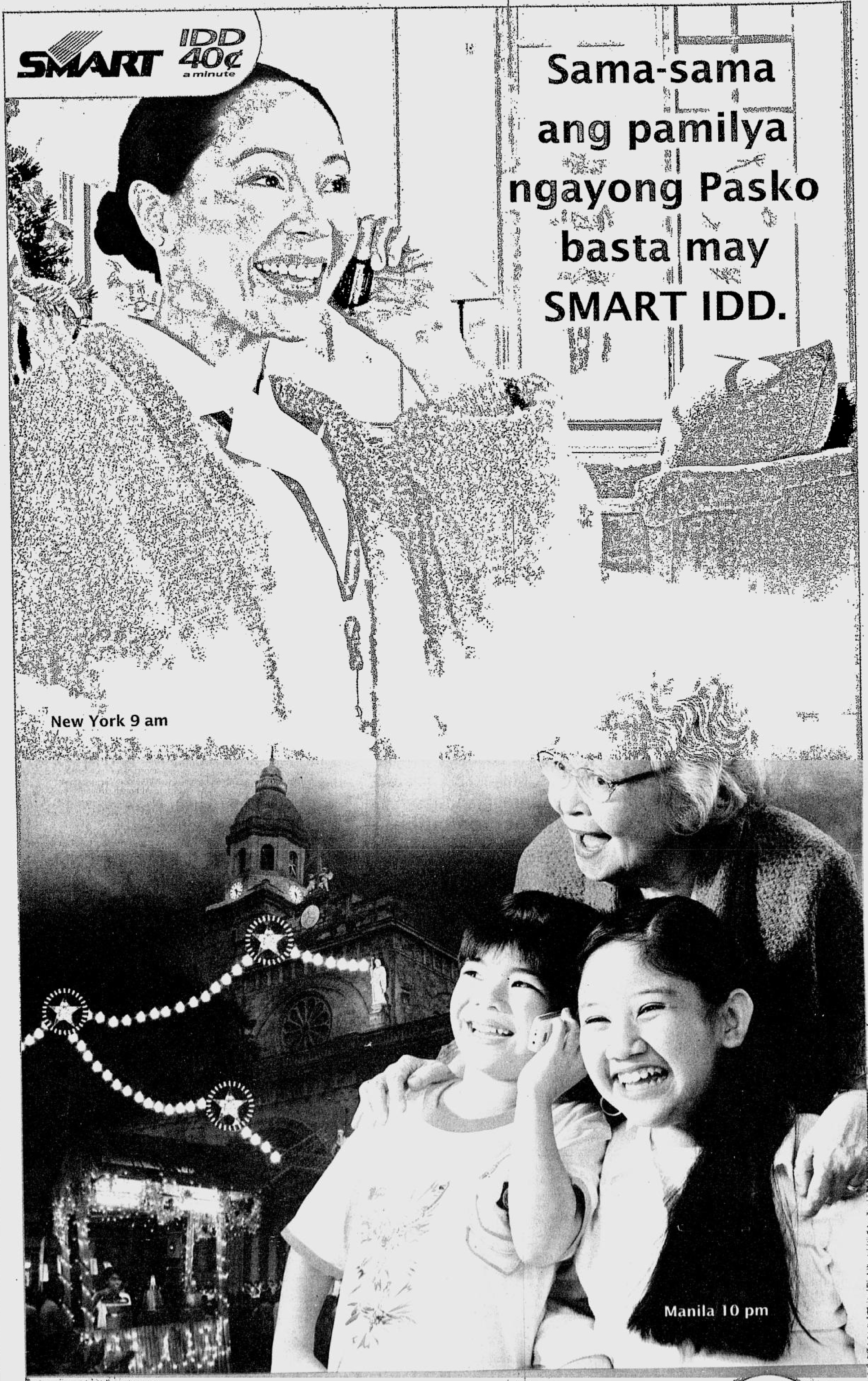
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For grieving JDV, Christmas in hotel, New Year in Spain

By Cynthia D. Balana

SPEAKER Jose de Venecia Jr. and wife Gina will spend the New Year in Spain for a much-needed respite after losing their 16-year-old daughter KC in a fire which razed their house in Dasmariñas Village, Makati.

Ma. Kristina Casimira or KC, the couple's youngest child, was buried the other day.

Noel Albano, deputy secretary general for media affairs at the House of Representatives and spokesperson of De Venecia, said the family had planned to visit Madrid and Barcelona even before the tragedy.

Joining the De Venecia couple on their trip are KC's brother Christopher, and Philip and Carissa—Gina's children from a previous marriage.

They, however, will spend Christmas at the Dusit Hotel in Makati City where they have been temporarily staying since the fire gutted their two-story mansion on Magnolia Street in posh Dasmariñas Village where they lost most of their personal belongings.

Albano said the Speaker, who will celebrate his 68th birthday on Dec. 26, was still trying to pick up the pieces with the help of his extended family.

He said the family would return from Spain on Jan. 9 in time for the resumption of sessions of Congress the following day.

Yesterday, De Venecia went to a tailor to purchase suits.

Albano said the Speaker had only one suit left after the fire, which he had left in his house in Dagupan City.

De Venecia was also wearing a new pair of shoes given to him by Joey, a son from a previous marriage.

There was still no word if the De Venecia family would return to their Dasmariñas house after its renovation. There was also a need to determine if the house was still structurally sound.

The couple may have to rent a house for a while until they find a new home, Albano added.

Task force seizes 'hot logs' in Quezon town

THE DEPARTMENT of Environment and Natural Resources yesterday seized suspected "hot logs" worth P1.4 million hidden in an unoccupied lot in Mauban, Quezon.

The DENR's anti-illegal logging task force found the stockpile of processed wood in a bank-foreclosed property in Barangay Pulo. It is the biggest single find since the team was created by Secretary Michael Defensor on Dec. 8.

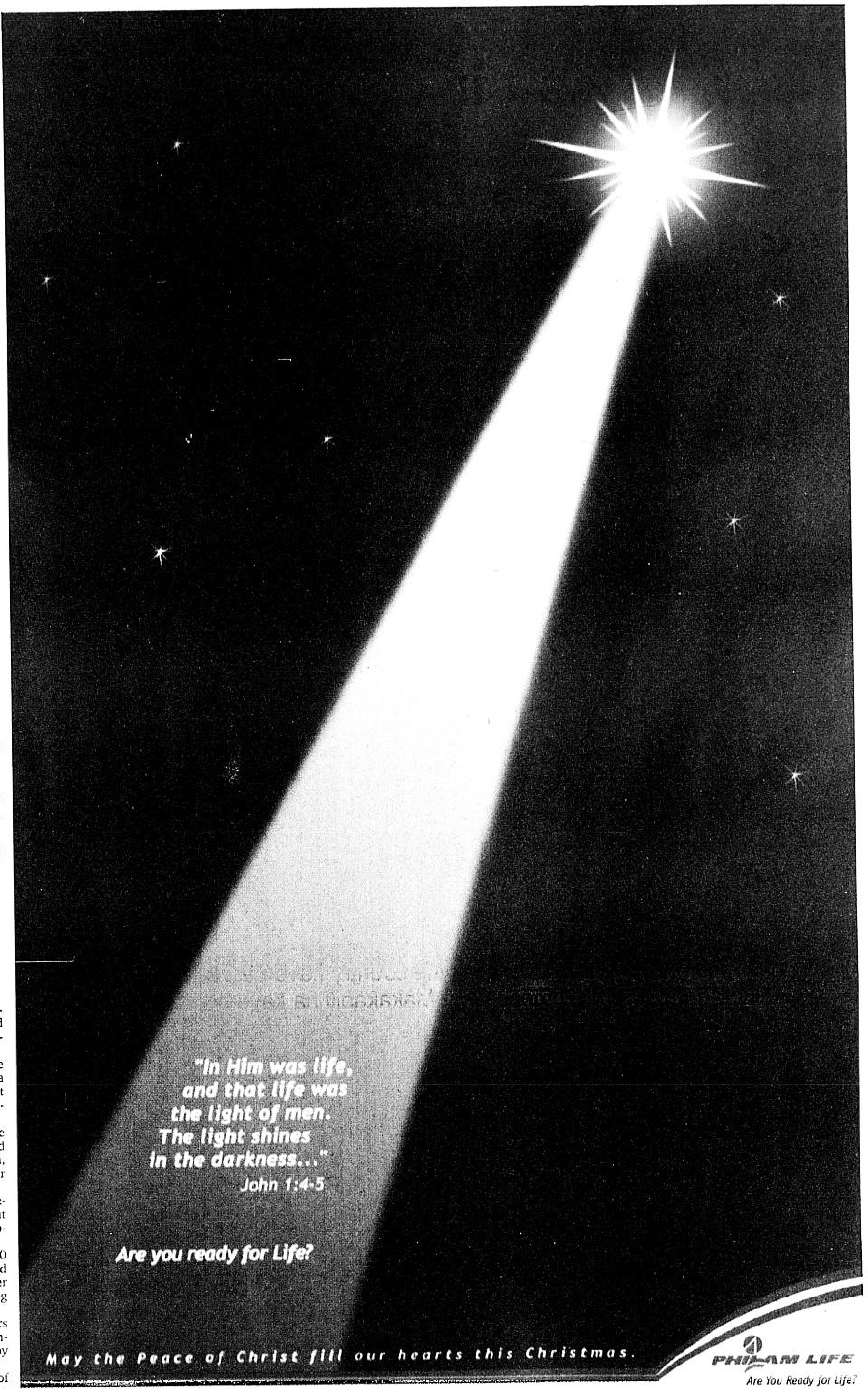
Retired Army Gen. Alfonso Dagudag, the task force chief, said the confiscated wood was mostly "first-class" narra and lawaan, which could fill up three 10-wheeler and four five-wheeler trucks.

The stacks of wood were camouflaged beneath twigs and leaves when discovered at around 4 a.m. yesterday, Dagudag said. Nobody has claimed the logs as of press time.

The narra planks, which fetch between P60 and P70 per board foot, totaled 18,000 board feet; while the lawaan, which sells at P22 per board foot, totaled 7,700 board feet, Dagudag said.

The task force was escorted by troopers from the Armed Forces' Southern Luzon command, which was formerly headed by Dagudag.

The operation was the latest in a series of raids launched by the DENR since Malacañang ordered a crackdown on illegal loggers widely blamed for the massive forest denudation in Luzon, particularly areas that saw killer landslides during recent storms. *Volt Contreras*



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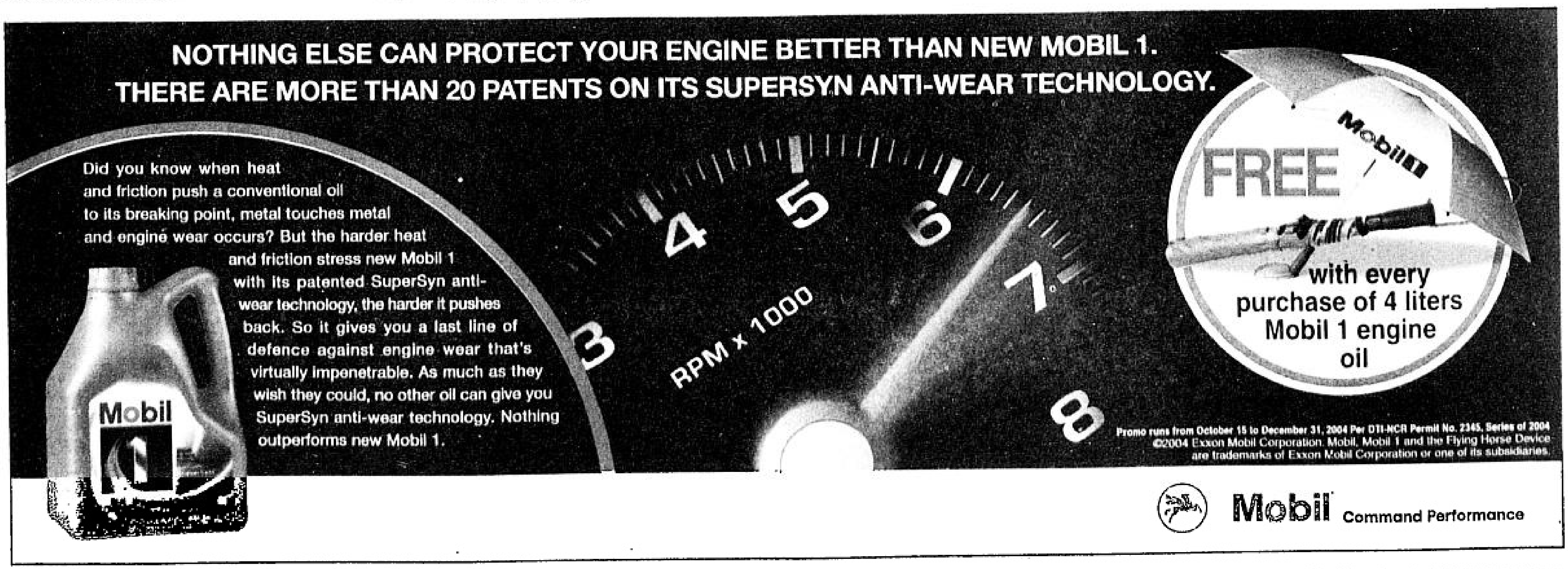

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Christmas merry to 2/3 of Filipinos

From page A1

said David, a sociology professor at the University of the Philippines.

Filipinos are happiest when they are with their family, though, "of course, they would like to have food on the table," he added.

David said the decrease in optimism from 82 percent in late 2002 and 77 percent in 2003 to only 64 percent this year was only to be expected, considering the decline of the economy.

"Next year, it will probably get worse because of rising inflation and unemployment," said David, who also writes a column for the INQUIRER.

State of economy

Antonio Gatmaitan, head of the think tank Political Economy Applied Research Foundation, said the survey results showed that "Filipinos have a sense of the general condition of the country."

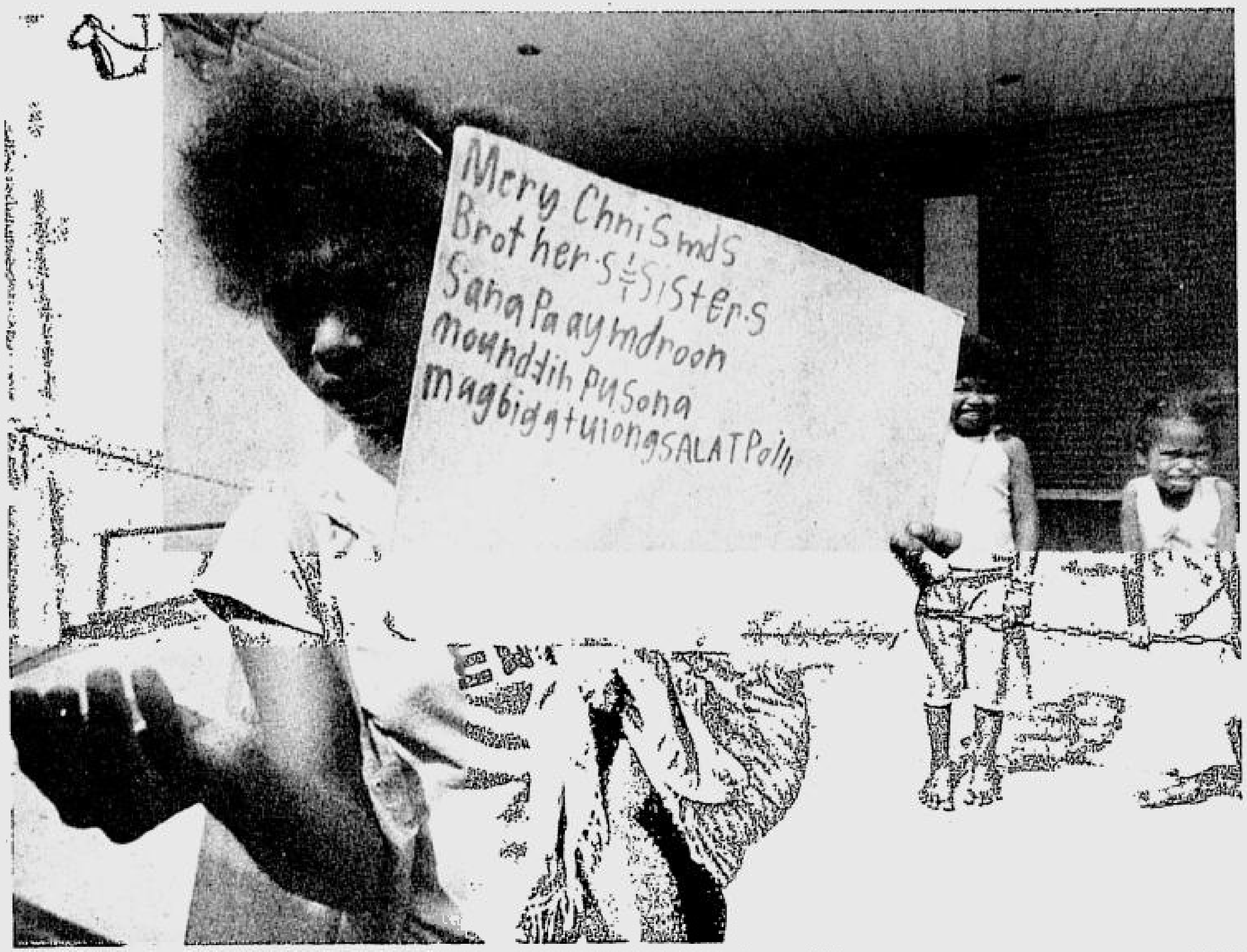
"Call it gut feel, or an overall perception that all is not well," he said.

Though he. agreed with David that the proportion of people optimistic about Christmas was still relatively high, Gatmaitan said the downward trend was alarming "to a degree."

"Filipinos are a generally hopeful people, but it (SWS survey) says they are becoming less and less so," he said.

Gatmaitan said the state of the economy was the single most important factor affecting Filipinos' optimism, or lack of it. The year has been characterized by rising inflation largely due to a series of fuel price increases that pushed the cost of most basic goods and services up.

Other factors can also affect the people's outlook, Gatmaitan said. "Uncertainty about government is one example."



A MANGYAN mother begs for money from motorists along Santolan Road in Quezon City. RUDY ESPERAS

The poor and Christmas

In a statement, SWS said the number of people belonging to Classes D and E expecting a happy Christmas had fallen sharply.

Among those in Class D, 59 percent expect a merry Christmas, down from 78 percent in 2003 and 82 percent in 2002.

Of those in Class E, 68 percent expect a happy Christmas, compared with 75 percent in 2003 and 82 percent in 2002.

There was also a decline across the regions in the proportion of people expecting a jolly Christmas.

In Metro Manila, 48 percent of residents expect a merry Christmas, a sharp decline from 65 percent in 2003 and 77 percent in 2002.

The number of Metro Manilans, who were neither happy nor sad about Christmas, rose to 35 percent in 2004 from 30 percent in 2003 and 18 percent in 2002.

Pessimistic

People pessimistic of their prospects next year also outnumber those who are optimistic.

Thirty percent expect their quality of life to get worse, while only 25 percent expect their quality of life to improve next year.

Net optimism is at negative 5 compared with positive 6 last August. It is negative 30 in Mindanao, negative 10 in Metro Manila, zero in the Visayas, and positive 8 in the rest of Luzon.

SWS said the "dominance of pessimism is rare, and previously occurred only in March 2003 (the Iraq war), in September and October 2000 (Juetengate), and in 1984 (post-Aquino assassination)."

The polling outfit said the survey questions on Christmas and the quality of life were not commissioned. *Juan V. Sarmiento Jr. and PDI Research*

Bishops urge . . .

From page A1

Christian community," he said, adding:

"This is the way to humanize our society and politics."

Malacañang has assigned Capalla to draft a national reconciliation framework that would allow the administration to reach out to opposition groups and other perceived longtime enemies of the government, including former first lady Imelda Marcos and business magnate Eduardo Cojuangco.

Capalla had said in an earlier interview that he and Jesuit priest Romeo Intengan were holding consultations with people involved in reconciliation efforts.

Solidarity

In Malacañang, solidarity was also the central theme in President Macapagal-Arroyo's Christmas message.

"Now that [opposition standard-bearer] Fernando Poe Jr. has been laid to rest in dignity, it is time to bring back our solidarity behind stability, peace and prosperity for the greater number of Filipinos," Ms Arroyo's spokesperson, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye, said in a statement.

"We were united in facing our problems and we succeeded because our motive is clean, the love for our flag is great and pure. This Christmas, I am grateful for your support and cooperation in my efforts to improve our standing," said Bunye, quoting the President.

The deep divisions in Philippine society again came to the fore during Poe's wake and funeral, with his friends and supporters, including deposed President Joseph Estrada, taking turns in assailing Ms Arroyo and her officials for allegedly robbing the actor of victory in the May presidential election.

Comedy king Dolphy summed it up by saying in a eulogy: "Poe was a winner; he did not lose."

The President's popularity has also taken a nosedive since she started serving her new six-year term. This was largely due to her inability to rein in the rising prices of fuel and basic goods.

These issues have triggered a fresh wave of rumors of destabilization attempts. But Malacañang is unfazed.

"We have faced similar plots in the past, and these have been foiled mainly because of the vigilance of the people," Bunye said.

"Attempts to undermine democracy have been and will be rejected by the people and do not stand a chance," he said. *With a report from Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.*

Sandigan resets Erap departure

From page A1

under house arrest at his villa in Tanay, Rizal, then asked the court to move his departure date to Dec. 23.

Chief Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio has opposed Estrada's departure, saying surgery can be performed here and there is a risk Estrada could seek asylum or resort to legal means to avoid returning to face the charges of plunder, a nonbailable offense punishable by death.

The Ombudsman also asked the Supreme Court to issue a temporary restraining order against the Sandiganbayan amid complaints from Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson and private prosecutors that the antigraft court had succumbed to pressures from the Palace to allow Estrada to "escape."

Without waiting for the Supreme Court—which is on recess—to act on the prosecution's opposition, the Sandiganbayan issued a resolution resetting the date of Estrada's departure to Dec. 26 when Estrada's American surgeon, Dr. Christopher Mow, is expected to arrive in Hong Kong.

Estrada directed his lawyers to post a P1-million travel bond on Thursday, Sandiganbayan spokesperson Renato Bocar said. The money was reportedly a Christmas gift from daughter Jacqueline Ejercito Lopez to her father.

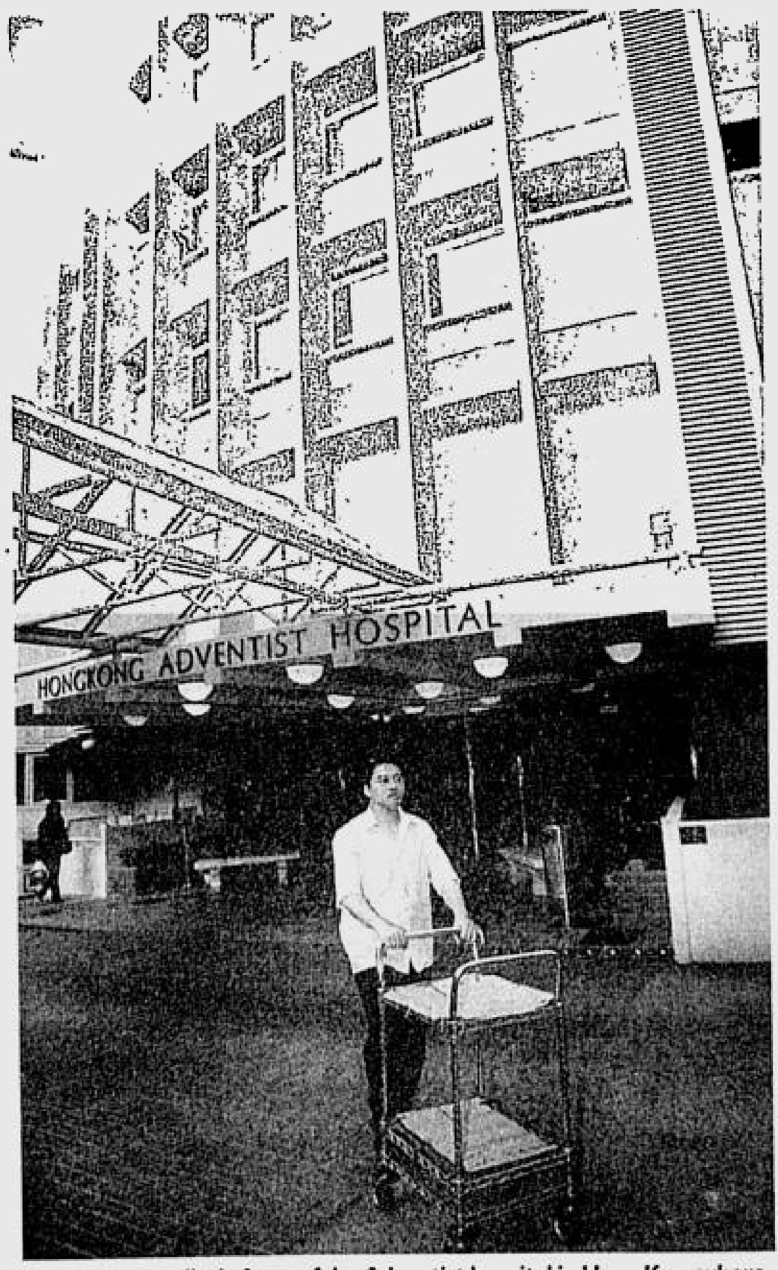
Newly appointed Presiding Justice Teresita J. Leonardo-de Castro, a member of the special division, noted that until yesterday, the antigraft court was "not aware of any temporary restraining order issued by the Supreme Court."

De Castro voted in favor of the resolution, along with Associate Justices Efren de la Cruz and Teresita V. Diaz-Baldos.

Special division chair Edilberto Sandoval, who voted in favor of an earlier resolution allowing Estrada to travel abroad, abstained from voting on the latest resolution. Associate Justice Francisco H. Villaruz Jr. opposed the new resolution allowing Estrada 21 days of medical leave.

Dissenting opinion

In his dissenting opinion, Villaruz said his colleagues should have first awaited the decision of the Supreme Court on the prosecution's petition for certiorari that the Sandiganbayan submitted to the tribunal on Monday.



A WORKER walks in front of the Adventist hospital in Hong Kongwhere deposed President Joseph Estrada will undergo knee surgery. AFP

"It is not the departure dates alone that are in issue in the certiorari proceeding but the more basic issue of whether this court committed grave abuse of discretion in allowing an accused, who is detained because of charges involving the nonbailable offense of plunder, to travel abroad for a limited period to undergo knee replacement surgery," he said.

"The even deeper issue is the determination of the balance between the state's right to prosecute, on the one hand and detained accused's. right, if any, to seek surgical treatment abroad, on the other," Villaruz added.

He said the latest Sandiganbayan resolution "will have the effect of the subordinate court preempting a higher court on its power of judicial review."

Even so, Sandiganbyan Sheriff Ed Urieta said Estrada's passport would be kept in the hands of his Philippine police escort "at all times."

Singson reaction

Singson, who had exposed illegal gambling payoffs and tax kickbacks to Estrada that led to his downfall, believes that the former President is no longer going to return to the country.

Contacted through his mobile phone yesterday, Singson said he was "disappointed" by the Sandiganbayan's decision, but added he could no longer do anything about it.

"I have already done my part," he said of his efforts to stop Estrada's travel. "I hope that he returns so we can finally resolve the case and free him if innocent and pardon him if he is guilty."

Estrada reaction

Estrada, speaking through spokesperson Didagen Dilangalen, lauded the Sandiganbayan decision as a "victory for justice tempered with compassion."

"The Sandiganbayan justices deserve our highest respect for resisting any attempts to subvert what is essentially a legal process that must be decided in a court of law, not through media with the use of black propaganda," he said.

Estrada has already complied with the Sandiganbayan's other legal requirements, including a pledge to return to the Philippines, his confinement at the Hong Kong Adventist Hospital and his expression in writing his recognition of the court's jurisdiction.

Prosecutors allege that while in office, Estrada amassed about P4 billion in illegal gambling payoffs, tax kickbacks and commissions stashed in secret bank accounts. Estrada has denied any wrongdoing.

Leniency

Earl Parreno, a political analyst, said the Arroyo administration had to show leniency toward Estrada to cool the temperature after fiery eulogies for Fernando Poe Jr., a hero in 200 films who nearly won the presidency in a May election.

Ms Arroyo placed security forces on alert hours before thousands watched and followed the horse-drawn carriage that took Poe's body to Manila's North Cemetery on Wednesday.

"Arroyo doesn't want emotions to be bottled up and suddenly explode," Parreno said. "She has to appease the crowd that went to Poe's funeral."

Parreno said the government was trying to avoid perceptions that Estrada, an opposition icon, was being persecuted.

Estrada was allowed to attend Poe's all-night wake, where he broke down as he stroked the brow of his best friend and gave a eulogy repeating opposition allegations that Arroyo's camp cheated the late action star of victory in the election.

"We will continue your fight, even if I die, just to fulfill your dream for our country and our people," Estrada said. *With reports from AP, AFP and Reuters*

FIRST Gentleman Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo gathers rich and poor children in a "sharing" Christmas party in Malacañang. EDWIN BACASMAS

Mike A's wishes . . .

From page A1

Gentleman Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo.

The First Gentleman hosted a "sharing party" in the Palace yesterday where he invited kids from wealthy families to eat and share gifts with children of the poor.

Among the party girls was 3-year-old Estela Marie Sur, one of four survivors from the collapsed Repador building in Real, Quezon.

He said he wanted rich children to be more generous by experiencing the joy of sharing.

Arroyo expressed his wish that "Filipinos be united so we could all be happy."

He said it was possible to unite the different social classes in the Philippines, much like when he invited children from wealthy families to interact and share their blessings with their "disadvantaged counterpart."

The children were treated to hamburgers, porridge from the First Gentleman, juices, hot dogs, pastries and pies. They were also entertained by mascots and received gift packs.

Arroyo also did not agree with the recent surveys that more Filipinos have become miserable because of the economic slump. He said the economy was enjoying tremendous growth and that Filipinos have more money to spend based on the thick crowds shopping in the malls.

With the steep dive in her approval ratings and jeers from the camp of the late Fernando Poe Jr., President Macapagal-Arroyo has little to be cheerful for.

The country has yet to heal from the wounds left by the ouster of President Joseph Estrada nearly four years ago and Ms Arroyo has yet to earn the public's trust and support.

For this reason, "I wish her [the President] happiness this Christmas," Arroyo said.

The First Gentleman's third wish is to have more grandchildren, most especially from daughter Luli, who remains unmarried among the siblings.

The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Suicide bomber seen behind Mosul carnage

MOSUL, Iraq—The deadliest attack on Americans in Iraq was probably the work of a suicide bomber who evaded security at a major US military base in Mosul, Washington's top general said on Wednesday.

"It lookslike it was an improvised explosive device worn by an attacker," Gen. Richard Myers, the chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told reporters in Washington, ending 36 hours of confusion over what killed 18 Americans and four others in a mess tent at the Marez base at lunchtime on Tuesday.

The admission, which gave credibility to a claim made by the Ansar al-Sunna militant group, has serious implications for US forces as they try to secure an election at the end of January.

On a day when a major US contractor pulled out of the country saying it was too dangerous, walking away from a $325 million contract to work on Iraq's damaged transport links, US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld admitted it would be a "mistake" to expect violence to end after the vote on Jan. 30.

A US assault last month on the Sunni insurgent bastion of Falluja was intended to quell pre-election violence. But US commanders say many guerrilla leaders, including possibly al-Qaida ally Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, scattered to places like Mosul.

Myers said only victory in a global US offensive against "extremists" could prevent a repeat of such attacks.

Casualty details referred to an unidentified non-American civilian among the dead. Fourteen were US soldiers, four were American civilians and three were Iraqi National Guards. Another 69 people were wounded—a heavy toll for a single bomber.

The blast site was peppered with what appeared to be ball bearings, a US military spokesperson in Mosul said.

A US military statement said no evidence was found of a mortar attack, a more common cause of damage on US bases.

That an insurgent could enter one of the hardest targets in Iraq will shock many. But such bases house growing numbers of Iraqi forces and other staff—vital to the US plan to hand security over in time in order to bring American troops home.

"The insurgency is going to get worse as we approach the elections," Myers said, stressing the key role that would be played increasingly by Iraqi security forces.

Rumsfeld, who is already under fire by critics for failing to do enough to protect troops in the field, added: "Looking for a peaceful Iraq after the elections would be a mistake."

"We have had a suicide bomber apparently strap something to his body, apparently a 'him', and go into a dining hall. We know how difficult this is to prevent," he said.

"The way we prevent this is we win," Myers said. He compared Mosul to attacks including Sept. 11, 2001, and the 1983 suicide truck bomb in Beirut that killed 241 US Marines—a massacre which contributed to a US decision to withdraw from Lebanon.

ABC television quoted unidentified sources saying troops in Mosul found documents last month referring to a "Beirut-style" attack. Ansar al-Sunna said one of its "martyrs" was the bomber. *Reuters*

Attack gives US serious dilemmas

By Alastair Macdonald

BAGHDAD—The US military's conclusion that a suicide bomber inside a US base was probably responsible for the deadliest strike on Americans in Iraq creates nightmare dilemmas for US forces.

Two months after twin suicide bombings struck at the heart of US political influence in Iraq, Baghdad's fortified Green Zone government compound, Tuesday's Mosul attack raises anxiety levels for troops, eroding any comfort zone in a country where they face incessant dangers outside their bases.

With the recruitment of Iraqis to security forces and other jobs inside US camps seen as vital to an exit strategy from Iraq for American soldiers, it could also sow mistrust.

At first sight, many will be surprised that a man strapped with explosives could somehow gain access in broad daylight not just to the sprawling airfield complex that is Forward Operating Base Marez in Mosul but walk right into the mess tent for lunch.

Yet US bases are teeming multinational villages where huge numbers of local security forces and Iraqi and foreign civilians mingle with American troops, eating in their canteens, sharing their shops and working with them to build new facilities.

The sheer scale of movement in and out of these areas, however fortified they may appear with high walls, razor wire, watchtowers, mortar squads and helicopters, makes controlling what—and who—goes in and out virtually impossible.

"The sheer logistics of life support for the Americans make it physically impossible to check everything," said a Western security consultant in Iraq, declining to be identified.

It seems unlikely the suicide bomber, claimed as a "martyr" by the Ansar al-Sunna Islamist guerrilla group in northern Iraq, walked through security checks in Mosul carrying explosives.

"You could bring stuff in piece by piece, with different people," said another security expert, who works in Baghdad.

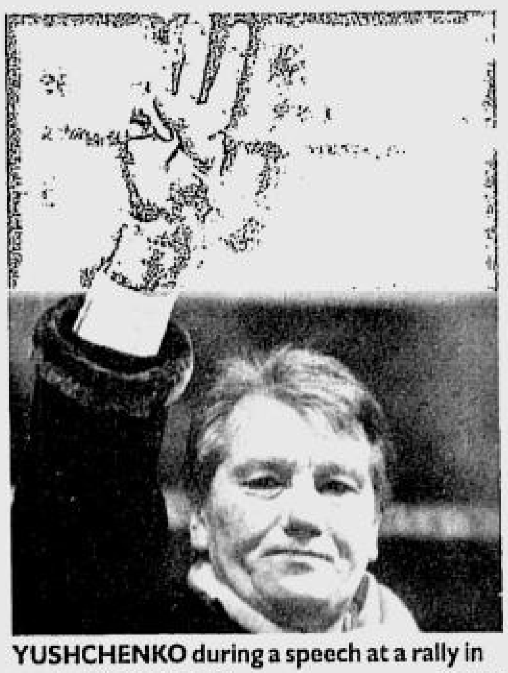
Elements of an explosive device could be hidden and assembled in any one of a thousand places on a sprawling base.

For any one of hundreds of people, probably local, working as cleaners, builders, bazaar stallholders, or as police or National Guards, to then don some kind of explosive jacket, maybe even looking like standard body armour and wander into the "chow hall" at lunchtime would attract little attention. *Reuters*

Yushchenko to supporters: Victory is near but more threats lie ahead

KIEV—Ukrainian opposition leader Viktor Yushchenko told thousands of orange-clad supporters that his victory is near, but he appealed to them to be ready to defend their vote after Sunday's repeat presidential election.

With just three days remaining until the court-ordered rematch between Yushchenko and Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich, thousands of cheering supporters massed in Kiev's main square Wednesday to mark one month since the so-called "orange revolution" swept the country.



YUSHCHENKO during a speech at a rally in central Kiev, Dec. 22. REUTERS

"The doors have been opened. The only thing left for us is to step over the threshold," Yushchenko said during the open-air speech in freezing temperatures on Independence Square.

He warned of a plot to disrupt the revote, but did not say who was behind it.

"The vote on Dec. 26 will not be an easy political walk," he said. "There are some forces preparing to disrupt and they are preparing brigades, groups who are readying to come to Kiev."

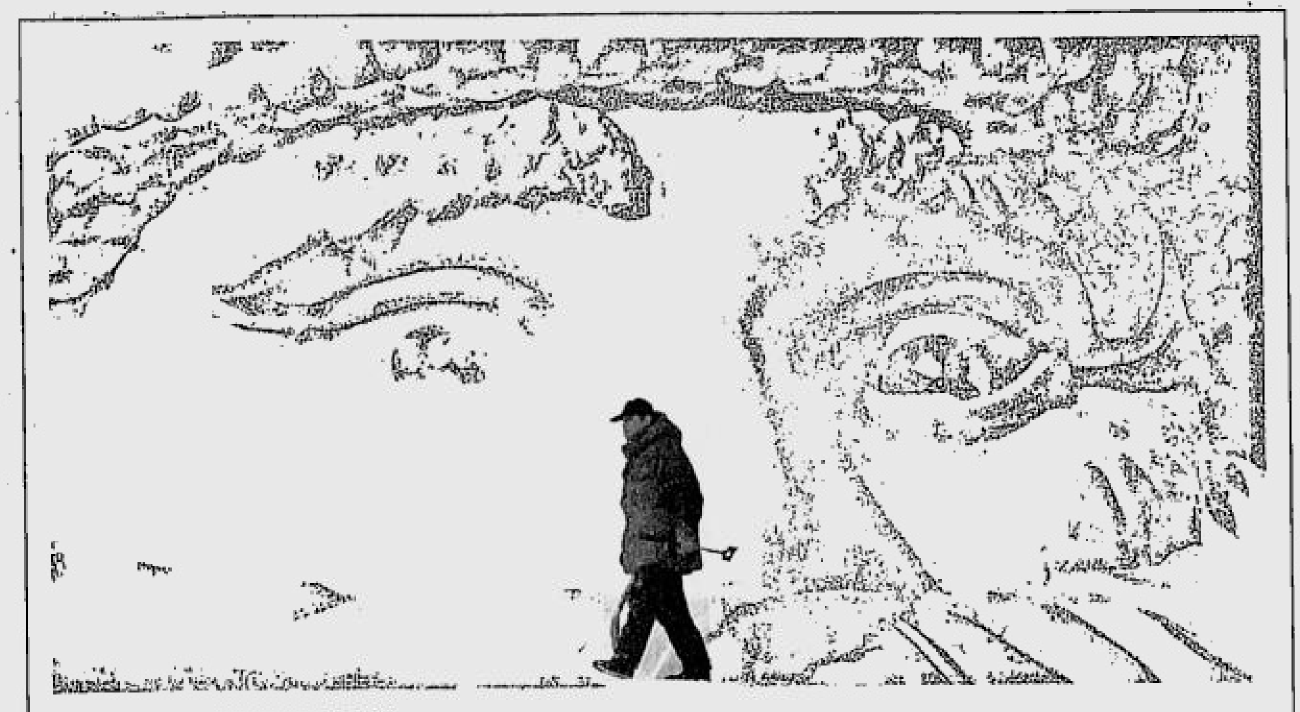
"We will come on this square, this stage, after the vote on Dec. 26 and will stay until our victory is celebrated," he said.

As he spoke the crowd—wearing orange armbands—waved orange banners and chanted "Yu-shchen-ko! Yu-shchen-ko!" A stage with orange Christmas trees was lit up, and the rap song that became synonymous with the earlier protests blasted from giant loudspeakers. A seven-meter-high balloon resembling a giant orange was tethered to the ground on one side of the square.

Fears of violence have been high ahead of Sunday's runoff, with rumors swirling that pro-Yanukovich supporters are being given weapons and poised to head to Kiev after the vote. Yanukovich's campaign staff has repeatedly denied the allegations.

The heated campaign has divided Ukraine between the pro-Yanukovich industrial, Russian-speaking east, and the west and center where Yushchenko draws his support. Some eastern regions had raised the possibility of pursuing autonomy if Yushchenko wins.

Ukrainians said they are wary, but many discounted the rumors. *AP*



SCULPTED FROM SNOW

A worker walks past the 80-meter-long snow sculpture, carved from about 7,000 cu. m. of snow, in Changchun, northeast China's Jilin province, Dec. 22. The sculpture, which organizers are claiming is the world's largest snow sculpture, is part of the attraction for a skiing festival during the Christmas season. AFP

EU court upholds Microsoft curbs

BRUSSELS—A European Union court Wednesday upheld product curbs and a record fine levied by the EU's executive commission against software giant Microsoft for abusing its market dominance.

Microsoft's share price tumbled in early New York trading but the firm took heart from a statement by the Court of First Instance, the EU's second-highest tribunal, that it had a "prima facie" case against the European Commission.

"I remain optimistic that we will prevail at the end of this process," Brad Smith, chief legal counsel for Microsoft, told reporters in a conference call.

The commission, however, rebuffed an overture from Bill Gates' company to hold fresh negotiations in a bid to reach an out-of-court settlement along the lines of a deal with US anti-trust authorities.

"The commission's decision of March 2004 stands. Therefore by definition we are not in the process of renegotiation," commission spokesperson Jonathan Todd told reporters.

"The court has confirmed that decision. It should be implemented immediately," he said.

Brussels imposed the fine of 497 million euros ($665 million) in March after finding that Microsoft had abused its overwhelming dominance in software for personal computers.

After a five-year investigation, it ruled that the company had to offer a European version of its Windows operating system without the Media Player utility, which offers access to audio and video content.

Microsoft was further ordered to provide competitors with the software interface code they need to enable their products to communicate with Windows.

The company wanted the Luxembourg-based court to suspend the remedies until the court could eventually rule on its appeal against the entire commission ruling, which is likely to take at least 18 months.

But the court rejected Microsoft's argument that it would "suffer serious and irreparable damage" if the measures took immediate effect.

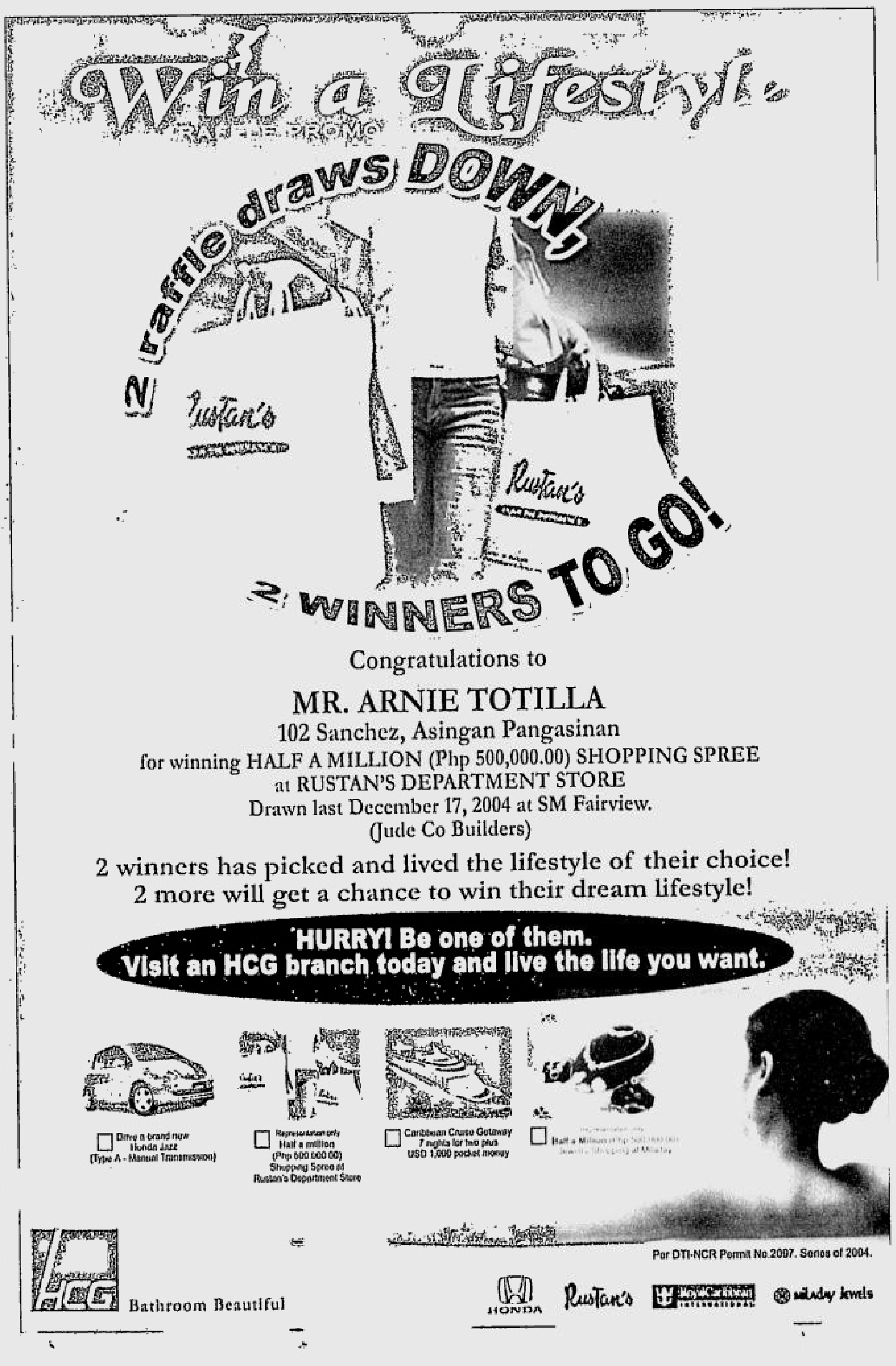
"Microsoft's application for interim measures is therefore dismissed in its entirety," it said.

However, the court added that Microsoft's case was "not at first sight unfounded and that the requirement that the applicant establish a prima facie case... is, consequently, satisfied."

The requirement to detach Media Player in particular strikes at the heart of Microsoft's business model, which involves tagging extra products onto Windows and marketing the operating system as an all-in-one suite of applications.

Smith said the company intended to make a website available later Wednesday that will explain how rivals can obtain its interoperability information.

It will make a European version of a stripped-down Windows without Media Player available to computer manufacturers during January. It should be available for sale in February, the lawyer said. *AFP*



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Saudi expels Libya envoy over 'slay plot'

RIYADH—Saudi Arabia said on Wednesday it had recalled its ambassador from Libya and will expel the Libyan envoy in Riyadh over Tripoli's alleged role in a plot to assassinate Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz.

Libya expressed its surprise at the Saudi decision and called for the Arab League to launch an investigation into the affair.

"We have asked our ambassador in Libya to come (back) and we will hand a memorandum to the Libyan ambassador asking him to leave," Foreign Minister Prince Saud al-Faisal told reporters.

The move was related to "the Libyan plot to which the kingdom was subjected," he said.

Details of the purported plot to assassinate Abdullah, de facto ruler of the oil-rich kingdom, came to light earlier this year when an American Muslim activist pleaded guilty to illegal financial dealings with Libya and testified that he had been involved in a Libyan plan to kill the prince.

Tripoli has denied involvement in such a conspiracy. Saud al-Faisal said his country was not taking more retaliatory measures against Libya at the moment.

"Despite the ugliness of what happened, the kingdom is confining itself to these measures... in appreciation of the brotherly Libyan people, especially with the approach of the hajj season," he said, referring to the annual pilgrimage to Muslim holy sites in Saudi Arabia.

A statement from the Libyan foreign ministry expressed "its great surprise at declarations by Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud al-Faisal on the recalling of its ambassador to Libya... Nothing has happened between the two countries to justify this.

"If the recalling is linked to accusations concerning an assassination attempt against the Saudi crown prince, these have been denied and they have been proven unfounded."

The statement said that the accusations were made "a long time ago. So why wasn't the ambassador recalled then?"

The ministry called on "the Arab League secretary general to carry out an enquiry into this surprising affair in order to know Arabia's motives" behind the decision.

The American Muslim, Abdurahman Alamoudi, was sentenced to 23 years in prison in Alexandria, Virginia, in October for illegal financial dealings with Libya.

According to court documents, Alamoudi, between November 1995 and September 2003, illegally transferred hundreds of thousands of dollars into the United States from Libya and other sources.

He made at least 10 trips to Libya and met with Libyan government officials.

During a March 13, 2003 meeting, Alamoudi and Libyan government officials allegedly discussed creating "headaches" and disruptions in Saudi Arabia. Alamoudi later learned that the actual objective was the assassination of the crown prince, according to US officials.

According to the officials, Alamoudi helped recruit participants for the plot by introducing the Libyans to two Saudi dissidents in London and facilitating the transfer of hundreds of thousands of dollars of cash from the Libyans to the dissidents to finance the plot.

Alamoudi was not charged in connection with the alleged plot.

Riyadh's decision to expel the Libyan envoy came one day after the United States announced it had put a leading London-based Saudi dissident, Saad al-Faqih, and another Saudi on its list of terrorist financiers and was asking the United Nations to sanction them as well.

The alleged Libyan plot against Abdullah has been a sore point in an otherwise remarkable rapprochement between the United States and Libya since Tripoli agreed to a settlement in the 1988 Lockerbie bombing and renounced weapons of mass destruction last year.

Accounts of the purported plot first surfaced in June, when The New York Times reported that Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi tried to have Abdullah murdered last year.

Saudi state-guided media at the time assailed the "ungrateful" Kadhafi, whom Riyadh had helped out of his Lockerbie-imposed isolation.

Two Libyan men attempted to assault Saud al-Faisal in Cairo in September 2003. The pair said they were trying to avenge a verbal slur on Kadhafi, who was called a "liar" by Abdullah at an Arab summit in Egypt in March that year.

The spat between the two leaders, broadcast live on television, came after Kadhafi charged that Riyadh was ready to "strike an alliance with the devil" to shield itself from then Iraqi president Saddam Hussein. *AFP*

EMPEROR Akihito waving to wellwishers at the Imperial Palace in Tokyo Dec. 23. REUTERS

Akihito laments 'heartbreaking' year on birthday

TOKYO—Japan's Emperor Akihito marked his 71st birthday Thursday with a somber address, reflecting an unhappy year which has seen the nation hit by natural disasters and controversies in the royal household.

"It has been a year with many heart-breaking events as natural disasters such as typhoons, torrential rains and earthquakes occurred in succession in various places," the monarch told well-wishers at the Imperial Palace.

At least 230 people perished in such disasters in Japan this year, the worst figure since 1983.

"I understand that different things have also happened to each and every one of you in the year. I wish you will take good care of yourself and the coming year will be a happy year for you," he went on through a public address system.

A total of 14,000 people gathered on a plaza in front of the Chowa (lasting peace) pavilion, waving red-sun national flags and shouting "Banzai (long live).

The emperor, flanked by Empress Michiko, Crown Prince Naruhito, Prince Akishino and his wife Princess Kiko, and Princess Sayako, appeared at the glassed-in balcony three times in the morning.

Crown Princess Masako, a 41-year-old Harvard-eductated former diplomat, was absent from the annual function as she is recuperating from a stress-induced illness.

The Imperial Palace ground is opened to the public only twice a year for appearances of members of the world's longest-running monarchy. It also admits crowds on Jan. 2 for New Year celebrations.

Emperor Akihito, in a birthday statement responding to written questions from media, expressed pain and confusion about the controversy over the crown princess.

Masako halted nearly all public duties a year ago due to stress amid pressure to produce a male heir to the throne. Her only child is 3-year-old Princess Aiko, who as a female cannot ascend the Chrysanthemum Throne.

Crown Prince Naruhito, 44, dropped a bombshell last May when he seized on a rare press conference to say that "developments" had denied his wife a personality and career.

But his younger and only brother, Prince Akishino, publicly chided him last month for taking his concerns to the media first, not the emperor.

The emperor said "there are still some things I have not fully understood yet" about the crown prince's complaint.

"It is regrettable that our respect for the independence of the crown prince and crown princess who maintain their own independent household made us fail to notice these various problems," he said.

But the year has also seen the imperial family in a bright light as the emperor's only daughter Princess Sayako, 35, finally found a husband in the person of Tokyo municipal government urban planner Yoshiki Kuroda, 39. *AFP*

Another season in a timeless land

Government Warnin
is dangerous

BIG WINNER Miss India World 2004 Sayali Bhagat greets an unseen audience as she displays a creation by designer Satya Paul during a fashion show in Calcutta, late Dec. 22. China and India will emerge the big winners when global textile quotas are abolished on Jan. 1, 2005, while the least developed countries will bear the brunt of the most painful adjustments, economists say. AFP

Taiwan a 'land mine' in Sino-US ties, says Armitage

TAIPEI—Taiwan played down on Thursday remarks by a senior US official who described the island as the biggest land mine in Sino-US ties and said Washington was not required to come to Taiwan's defense if attacked by China.

The comments by US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage raised suspicions in Taiwan that Washington may be leaning towards Beijing in the bitter dispute between the mainland and the island China claims as a renegade province.

Premier Yu Shyi-kun and Foreign Minister Mark Chen tried to ease any anxiety, saying US policy 'was unchanged toward democratic Taiwan, which has aspirations for sovereignty but which China has said it will invade if it declares independence.

"Armitage was very clear. US policy toward Taiwan has not changed," the China Times quoted Yu as saying.

The United States broke off diplomatic ties with Taiwan in 1979 and recognized China, but remains the island's biggest arms supplier and strongest ally with treaty obligations under the Taiwan Relations Act to help Taipei to defend itself.

However, Armitage's remarks to the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) in the United States on Dec. 10, and picked up by Taiwan media this week, hinted at a possible shift.

"We have the requirement with the Taiwan Relations Act to keep sufficient force in the Pacific to be able to deter attack; we are not required to defend," Armitage said, adding that it was up to the US Congress to decide if America should go to war.

US state department spokesperson Richard Boucher said on Wednesday Armitage had restated US policy in familiar terms.

Wary of being dragged by Taipei into a conflict with Beijing, a nuclear power, Washington has become increasingly concerned by what it sees as independence-leaning moves by the government of Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian.

Mixed with that concern is mounting frustration that Taiwan appears to be solely counting on US help to fend off China—to the point that Taipei is dragging its feet over a huge $18 billion arms deal offered by Washington, analysts said.

Thus the United States has clarified its position in the past year, dropping some of the strategic ambiguity that had characterized diplomatic relations since China and Taiwan split at the end of a civil war in 1949.

For example, US Secretary of State Colin Powell said in October that Taiwan did not enjoy sovereignty as a nation and spoke of eventual reunification with China, departing from a longstanding US policy of taking no position on the outcome.

Armitage said he agreed with Beijing's 'one China' policy, and analysts noted he used a stronger wording than the past "acknowledgment" of China's claim over Taiwan.

When asked where the land mines lay in US-China relations, Armitage told PBS: "I would say Taiwan. Taiwan is one. It's probably the biggest."

"The United States hopes to manage the situation in the Taiwan Strait and not let it spin out of control," said Lin Bih-jaw, professor of diplomacy at National Chengchi University. "It wants to avoid misinterpretation and miscalculation."

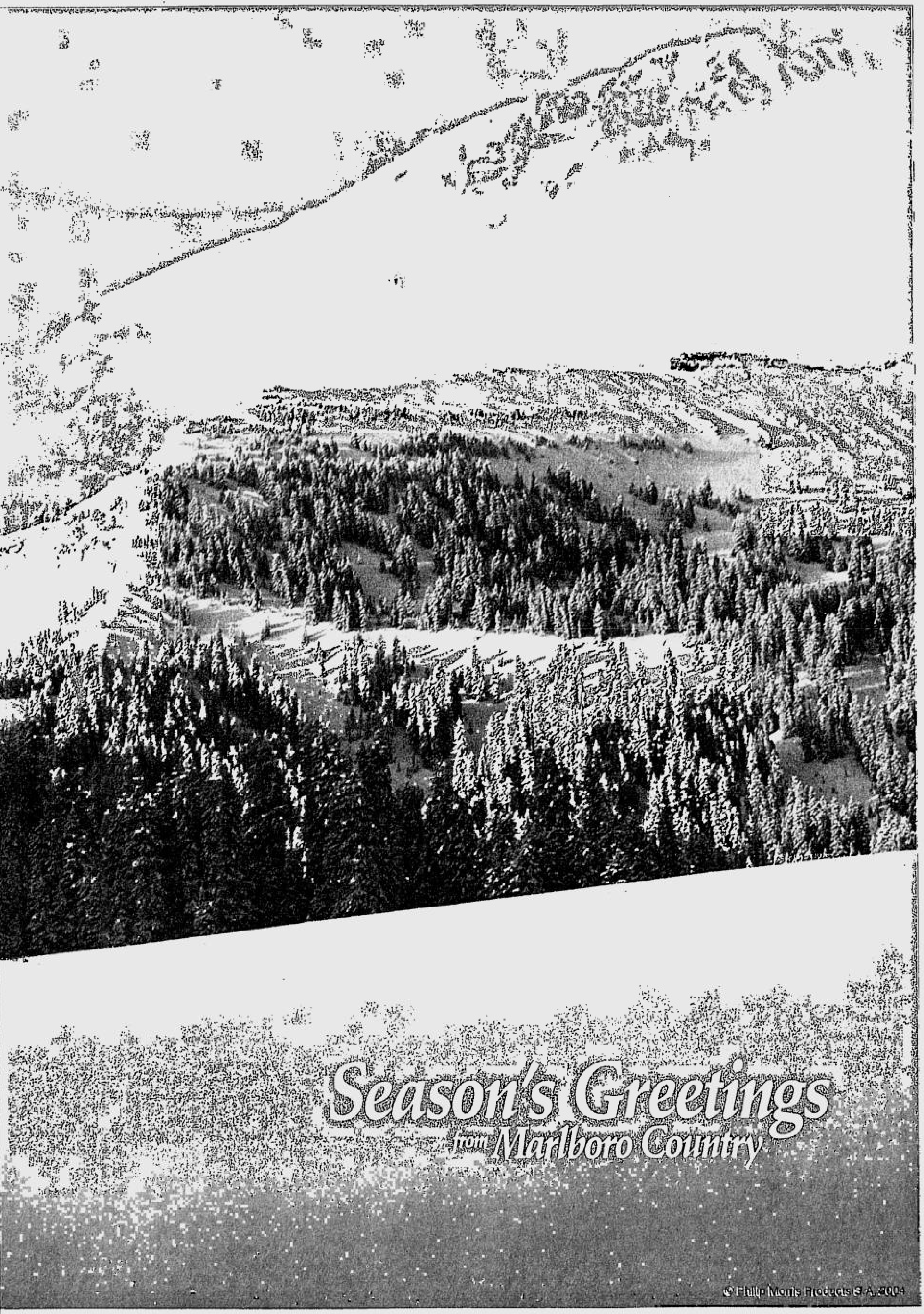
While Washington may be leaning toward China, needing its help on North Korea and other problems, the United States will still retain some flexibility over the Taiwan issue, Lin said.

"The United States wants to reserve the final decision-making power... They want to maintain some level of ambiguity, though it's clear this ambiguity is smaller and smaller," he said.

China claims self-governing Taiwan as part of its territory and threatens to invade if the island moves towards statehood.

It is deeply suspicious of Chen's plans to adopt a new constitution by 2008, seeing it as a move towards independence.

With the Chinese parliament poised this weekend to debate an anti-secession law aimed at preventing Taiwan independence, analysts said Armitage's comments put more pressure on Taiwan President Chen to maintain the political status quo. *Reuters*



g: Cigarette smoking
to your health

NINE-WEEK-OLD cat "Little Nicky" peers out from her carrying case, Dec. 22 in Texas. "Little Nicky" a successfully cloned cat was sold to Julie by Genetic Savings and Clone for $50,000. AP

US firm sells cloned cat, spurs ethics debate

SAN FRANCISCO—The first cloned-to-order pet sold in the United States is named Little Nicky, a 9-week-old kitten delivered to a Texas woman saddened by the loss of a cat she had owned for 17 years.

The kitten cost its owner $50,000 and was created from DNA from her beloved cat, named Nicky, who died last year.

"He is identical. His personality is the same," the owner, Julie, told said in a telephone interview. Although she agreed to be photographed with her cat, she asked that her last name and hometown not be disclosed because she said she fears being targeted by groups opposed to cloning.

Yet while Little Nicky, who was delivered two weeks ago, frolics in his new home, the kitten's creation and sale has re-ignited fierce ethical and scientific debate over cloning technology, which is rapidly advancing.

The company that created Little Nicky, Sausalito-based Genetic Savings and Clone, said it hopes by May to have produced the world's first cloned dog—a much more lucrative market than cats.

While it is based in the San Francisco Bay area, the company's cloning work will be done at its new lab in Madison, Wis.

Commercial interests already are cloning prized cattle for about $20,000 each, and scientists have cloned mice, rabbits, goats, pigs, horses—and even the endangered banteng, a wild bull that is found mostly in Indonesia.

Several research teams around the world, meanwhile, are racing to create the first cloned monkey.

Aside from human cloning, which has been achieved only at the microscopic embryo stage, no cloning project has fueled more debate than the marketing plans of Genetic Savings and Clone.

"It's morally problematic and a little reprehensible," said David Magnus, co-director of the Center for Biomedical Ethics at Stanford University. "For $50,000, she could have provided homes for a lot of strays."

Animals rights activists complain that new feline production systems aren't needed because thousands of stray cats are euthanized each year for want of homes.

Lou Hawthorne, Genetic Savings and Clone's chief executive, said his company purchases thousands of ovaries from spay clinics across the country. It extracts the eggs, which are combined with the genetic material from the animals to be cloned. *AP*

Greetings!!!
In our thrust to extend our utmost service to those who might need it during the Holidays, we are happy to announce that we are still open for business on DEC. 26 'till DEC. 30, 2004 (same time as usual).
So see you then! God Bless!!!
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OPINION

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Banal Christmas

TONIGHT, before midnight, Filipinos will flock to Catholic churches across the archipelago to attend the penultimate Mass ending the novenary of early dawn Masses that started last Dec. 16. Strictly speaking, the Mass is not penultimate because Catholics are still mandated to go to a Christmas Day Mass tomorrow. But the midnight Mass tonight is a credible finis to the nine-day run-up to the birth of Christ that remarkably prefigures the long wait in the Old Testament for the birth of the Messiah.

EDITORIALS

Of course, the preparation for Christmas started long way before with the Catholic liturgy's lighting of the Advent candle wreath last month. The lighting symbolizes many things, among them, the vigilant anticipation of Christians for the coming of Christ.

But Filipinos have long ago anticipated Christmas, since the onset of September when radios started filling the airwaves with the first Christmas carols, a case of Christmas overeagerness. A sort of anticipation that borders on obsession.

But Philippine Christmas takes its most distinctive form at the start of December when the streets and establishments are festooned with lights that have become more and more ingenious through the years. Offices and schools start elaborate gift-giving practices, aside from the predictable parties. Corporations play Santa Claus by showering goodies on depressed communities and marginalized sectors. Giving becomes institutionalized, at least for a month.

But the practices that characterize the Filipino Christmas have become so common that they seem commonplace and banal. Such is the power of the practices to insinuate and integrate themselves into the season that their import has been lost in the hurly-burly of the celebration.

Even the altruism of Christmas is lost in the corporate do-goodism that has more and more become part of the bag of tricks of marketing men eager as always to exalt business and corporate virtue in another form of grating hardsell. There seems to be no end to commerce's remarkable facility to debase Christmas.

Meaningful Christmas

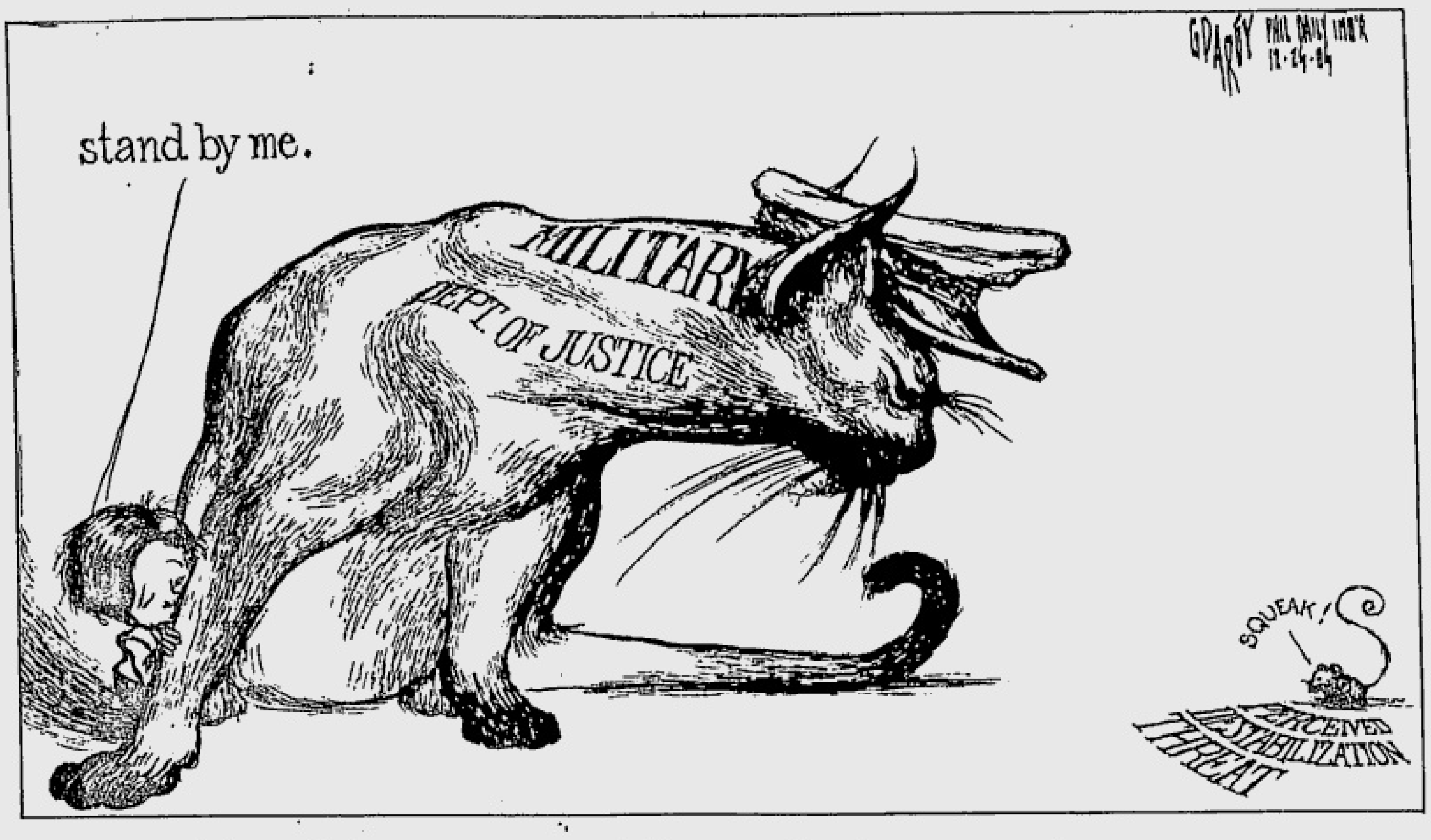
AND yet this year seems a particularly meaningful Christmas for the Philippines. The month started propitiously enough with destructive typhoons that flooded and laid waste a wide swath of the archipelago's southeastern regions, displacing tens of thousands and killing hundreds. The death of theater great Zeneida Amador late last month, and the deaths this month of Fernando Poe Jr. and KC de Venecia, the last one tragically in a fire, have cast a pall of gloom in a season that is otherwise determined to make merry and cheer things up.

All these tragedies should compel us to reflect the meaning of the season and plumb its message and insights. This would require going beyond the tinsel and glitter of Christmas and reacquainting ourselves with its rituals that have become second nature to us, but which we have somehow transformed into rote in our eager rush to embrace commerce and materialism.

In the end, the meaning of Christmas is the same one that has been ingrained in us by the rituals and practices that the Spanish friar missionaries and the Church had in the past introduced and fostered in order to consolidate the faith. The practices are basically sacramental forms that symbolize and reflect in themselves the glory of God and God's fellowship with mankind in a world seemingly bereft of hope and vitality. The genius of the Spanish missionaries was to integrate these practices into the lifestyle of the Filipinos so that they would seem to form a seamless weave in the larger tapestry of Filipino religiosity.

Nevertheless, they are not mere pious practices. If the sacraments guided the native Filipinos from birth to grave, it is the same with these practices: they accompany the Filipinos through the vagaries of existence, endowing their lives with meaning, relevance, love and hope. St. Thomas Aquinas, the great Dominican theologian and Doctor of the Church, has a phrase for it—"grace builds on nature."

So what is the meaning of Christmas? We should go back to the lighting of the Advent candle. The practice is not a mere pious gesture. If the candle signifies and even sacramentalizes hope, its lighting is a prophetic act. It means that we are committed to keeping the flame of hope alive in a world that seems determined to go back to darkness. It's an act of faith, and in the context of the Filipinos' many-sided struggles, a subversive and defiant one.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The old man and his Christmas lanterns

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

A VERY Merry Christmas to everybody.

Over the years, readers would tell me about columns of mine that they would like to read again. I would send some of them photocopies of the columns—if I could still find them. The most requested piece is a Christmas column about an old man during my boyhood. Because I cannot find a copy of that article anymore, and it being Christmas again, I have decided to rewrite it from memory. Here it is:

When I was in primary school in the barrio of Tonsuya, Malabon, there was a small pond beside our four-room schoolhouse. Talisay trees grew on the banks of the pond. From this pond, we fetched water which we used to water our vegetable plots in the garden at the back of the school.

On the mudbank at the other side of the pond, there was a small hut where an old man lived alone. A hard-packed path led through the water to the hut. During recess, we'd walk across this path to the hut. For the old man made kites, yo-yo and tops for us. In exchange, we shared our *baon* with him or gave him a few centavos.

Toward Christmas, however, when the night air started to get chilly, he wouldn't make anything else but Christmas lanterns, the five-pointed ones, in various colors. He would have made a lot of money selling them.

But no, he didn't sell them. Instead, he gave them away for free to his neighbors. His only condition to them was that they would keep them lighted at night during the whole Christmas season.

He gave the lanterns to all the houses that lined the many paths that led to his hut. The neighborhood surrounding his hut was easily the best-lit village in the whole town during Christmastime. We would walk at night past the school and through the neighborhood just to look at the old man's lanterns all lighted up. The old man's hut had the most lanterns, one on each of the four windows, another hanging over the doorway, and more over the path leading to the hut.

When all the houses had their lanterns, the old man would sleep most of the day and stay up the whole night. We could see him sitting beside his window, looking out as if waiting for somebody. This went on year after year.

This was a curious behavior and nobody had any explanation. The old man, who was not a talker in the first place, did not offer any reason. And nobody dared to ask him for any.

Until I was older and couldn't stand it anymore. I kept asking my old folks why he was doing it, but they had no satisfactory answer. "Why don't you ask him yourself?" they kept telling me. So one night I did.

One Christmas Eve, I wrapped some food from our *noche buena* and took it to him. I found him looking out the window as usual, a forlorn figure in the light of the lanterns. When he saw me approaching, he jumped from his chair and raced down the stairs and the path across the pond toward me. But when he recognized me, he stopped, as though disappointed.

"Oh, it's you," he said. "I thought..."

"I brought you some *noche buena*," I said, showing him the food. "It's Christmas."

"Oh, thank you. I haven't had *noche buena* in a long time," he said. "Come up." We went back to the hut.

The old man took two tin plates, put the food in them, placed them on the table and arranged the two chairs.

"Let's eat," he invited. "Merry Christmas."

I let him finish eating before I popped the question. He paused a long time, thinking. Then he went to the kitchen to wash his hands.

When he came back and sat before me, he drew a deep sigh before speaking. "I am waiting for my son."

"I didn't know you have a son," I said.

"I have one, the only child. His mother died when he was a baby," he said. "He's a young man now."

"Where is he?"

"I don't know. He went away one day, said he would be back by Christmas. Many Christmases have gone, but he has not returned."

"Where did he go?"

"Somewhere, with his friends. He belongs to an organization working for the people and for the country. 'Just wait, *Itay*,' he told me. "When we are successful, we will all be better off. Just wait.'"

"What organization? What are they doing?" I asked.

"I don't know. He was always away somewhere, working for us, he said. One day, he came home and packed his bags. "I am going away for a while, *Itay*,' he told me. 'But I will come back, wait for me. I will be back by Christmas. Wait for me.' Then he was gone."

He sighed, looked long at the footpaths lighted by his lanterns.

"That was many Christmases ago, but he has not yet come back," he continued. "Where is he? I'm so lonely for him. For many years, there were only the two of us together. I raised him in this hut, from the time he was still a baby, you know," he cupped his face in his hands. "Now he is gone."

"What was he running away from?"

"I think I know," he replied. "Some soldiers came here one day looking for him. I told them he went away, I don't know where."

"What about the lanterns?" I asked. "Why are you giving away so many of them?"

"They are to guide him back home. He will recognize my lanterns. I am afraid he would lose his way in the dark. He has been away a long time, you know. The lanterns will show him the way back here. Come home, my son."

That conversation took place a long time ago. The old man is dead now. His hut is gone. The pond has been filled up, the schoolhouse torn down and new houses now stand in their places.

But where is the son? Is he dead? Did they finally get him? Or is he still alive somewhere?

If he happens to read this, he will recognize his father, the old man who made Christmas lanterns to guide him home. He lies somewhere in the small cemetery at the boundary of Malabon and Caloocan. Visit him there. He has been waiting for you.

Remember, celebrate and believe

PASSION FOR REASON

Raul C. Pangalangan

TOMORROW we celebrate the season of giving, in a land eternally in need of givers, yet perennially debased by takers. The unseasonal "taking" (to use constitutional law jargon) of the Piatco and Fraport-built airport terminal—snuck in while everybody else was having their Christmas party—is but the latest of the jarring events that continue to mar the holidays. It follows the landslides in Real, Quezon, and the deaths of several people famous and unknown but all loved just as dearly by those they left behind. Yet strangely that is why we need Christmas; it promises hope when all we see is the grayness of despair. The peaceful funeral of Fernando Poe Jr., for one, shows that there is a love and dignity that can rise above politics, that can gather a sea of humanity for reasons that have little to do with contests for earthly power and all to do with pure admiration for a departed idol.

What is so compelling then about the promise of redemptive birth that we continue to celebrate it 2,000 years later? Starting with the most prosaic, it is a welcome break from the "monotony and drudgery of life," which is how the Supreme Court justified the mingling of public and private funds for a fiesta and explained why an otherwise religious celebration is actually secular in character.

The modern world recognizes diversity and advises tolerance of all faiths. My youngest son Miguel, when he was enrolled in a public school in Cambridge, Massachusetts, wonderfully learned his favorite "Christmas carol," "Spin the Dreidle," a Jewish song for Hanukkah, rather than the traditional "Oh Come All Ye Faithful" that his other classmates sang and which Pinoy Catholics so love (next only to "I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas," the national anthem of all aspiring TNTs).

But secularization has its downside. A purely secularized Christmas easily degenerates to a frenzy of shopping. The spirit of sharing easily dissipates, and we lose sight of what the Christian world celebrates as the ultimate act of selflessness: the incarnation of the Christ, of the Word Made Flesh, when the Divine was made man, was born and lived amongst us.

Each time I attend the midnight Mass, and the priest so excitedly speaks of this miracle—so moving that it always brings a smile to my face just thinking about it—I look around at all the tired and sleepy souls around me: the grown-ups all exhausted from their parties; the *lolos* and *lolas* so happy that the brood is complete: and the *apos*, all dressed and dragooned for the occasion, torn between sleeping and waiting for the opening of their gifts. And I often wonder, did Jesus Christ actually come down to earth for this?

If the Pinoy Catholic takes the message of Christmas really seriously, he won't be able to celebrate at all. We revel in the birth of a carpenter's son, yet how many Filipino carpenters can actually raise their sons and daughters in decent comfort today—shelter, feed and school them? Our hearts go to Joseph and Mary when we learn that their infant was born in a manger, yet there is perpetually "no room at the inn" for the homeless. Party tables groan under the weight of rich buffets, while others starve. And, oh, how we praise the prophets of old, and yet slay, imprison, or chastise new prophets unless they look savvy and sound cool and conform to the ways of our imperfect world—or unless they carry guns or are supported by a political party.

"In Knowledge and Politics," the legal philosopher Unger sought to define the place of thinking, of reason, in relation to "other kinds of striving," namely, politics and prayer. "Philosophy is a territory bounded on one side by politics and on the other side by religion. ... When one thinks philosophical problems through, one comes at last to the outer frontiers, politics and religion, at which the philosopher's pride is cast down, and other kinds of striving come to the fore. ... When philosophy has gained the truth of which it is capable, it passes into politics and prayer, politics through the world is changed, prayer through which men ask God to complete the change of the world by carrying them into his presence and giving them what, left to themselves they would always lack."

In today's practical world, we must welcome Christmas as induced spirituality. On Dec. 25 each year, we come face to face with the smallness of earthly victories, and perforce we forswear politics and pass into prayer. The challenge is to induce spirituality every waking moment, every other day of the year, and given our dire straits, that is an awesome burden.

Restoring the spirituality of Christmas requires us to secure the place of faith in our lives. It is a faith that must go beyond ritual and ceremony. The Catholicism of memorized prayers mindlessly chanted in fancy temples must be replaced by mindfulness in transformative work that is done in daily life. We must find our faith in that yearning, when all else seems bright and okay, that there is something missing, a presence, a warmth, a peaceful feeling without which we feel incomplete. We must find it in that light, when all else seems dark and ominous, that shows the way to hope, that assures you that someone cares and that things will turn out well in the end. We must find it in the triumph of the spirit, without which all other triumphs lose meaning, yet by itself is enough. I wish you all the best in this season of grace.

* * *

Comments to raul.pangalangan@up.edu.ph

Nightmare

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

WITH THE PEACEFUL burial of Fernando Poe Jr., the Arroyo administration survived the worst nightmare of its first six months in office. The passing of Poe does not clear the path for less turbulent times in the new year. 2005 promises to be another year of "living perilously" without the ghost of Poe's electoral protest haunting the administration. Protest at the Presidential Electoral Tribunal will be the least of the administration's worries. The fiscal deficit crisis is more ominous and it could bring economic storms.

The Filipino masses poured out their grief at the funeral, but the dire expectations did not materialize. The size of the funeral march disappointed the expectations of those who staged its huge production in the streets to rival the mammoth funeral of Benigno Aquino Jr., which drew, according to best estimates, more than a million people.

Foreign news agencies, which are more skeptical about exaggerated claims of crowd attendance, placed the crowd between "tens of thousands" and 300,000. Thus, Aquino's funeral still holds the record attendance. The crowd estimates replayed the partisan rivalry over claims of attendance at the political election rallies and people power demonstrations at Edsa.

The media ran out of hyperbole to describe the turnout. Another actor stopped blowing up the figures and described the attendance at the weeklong wake and the funeral with weasel words: a box-office smash "unparalleled in history." Rene Saguisag, a lawyer whose professional success is built on evidence could not help making sweeping statements such as, "This is a powerful political statement. This is the real election protest, not [the] one in the Supreme Court. The outpouring is just incredible."

Alas, it takes more than crowd estimates at funerals to make a case that Poe was allegedly massively cheated in the May election.

The administration took no chances and, indeed deployed security measures around Malacañang, expecting the worst—that is, the funeral might be used by troublemakers to whip up the emotions of the crowd to storm Malacañang. The administration must have learned one lesson from the May 1, 2001 mob attack: it is less stupid to err on the side of over-preparation than to be caught flat-footed. The "intelligence" information received by Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez revealed that some conspiratorial groups had plotted to incite the highly emotional crowd to go on a rampage to pave the way for some military plotters announcing a defection from the government, similar to the January 2001 scenario, triggering a total collapse of military support for the regime. Conspiratorial theories did not die with Poe. His protest may have died with him, but opposition ranks are not wanting of parties who would want to keep it alive. Similarly, there should be no want of lawyers willing to take up the cudgels for litigants who might benefit from the pursuit of the protest.

The scenario of the so-called "plot" exposed by Gonzalez called for the formation of a junta, in the event that it succeeded in ousting the Arroyo regime—with Poe's widow, Susan Roces, acting as a "front" president for a shadowy group. This scenario is laughable and a tired recast of Filipino bathos involving widows of popular political figures being shoehorned into their husband's political role: Cory Aquino in place of Sen. Benigno Aquino; Magnolia Antonino for Sen. Gaudencio Antonino who died in a helicopter crash. According to Filipino political tradition, widowhood becomes a ticket of succession to political office, as though it gives widows a divine right to rule. It reflects well of Roces' sense of proportion that she was not involved in the plot that was taken seriously by Secretary Gonzalez.

The nightmares looming ahead of President Macapagal-Arroyo are more politically threatening for her survival than the memory of Poe, the electoral protest, and the demons of recurrent coup plots that are doomed to fail because they are built on stale formulae, lack of originality and false assumptions of popular support.

Staring Ms Arroyo in the face as she leaves 2004 is her nightmarish plunge in popularity rating and a possible downgrading of the Philippine credit rating by international rating organizations. She has found out that pruning the deficit cannot be achieved by the half measures, like the new tax schemes she asked Congress to pass.

As the sixth month of her six-year term draws to a close, the latest survey of the Social Weather Stations (conducted in November and December 2004) showed that her net approval rating had plummeted to a record low, giving her a net approval rating of negative 5 percent. The fourth-quarter survey found 38 percent satisfied and 43 percent dissatisfied with her performance. Her net satisfaction shaved off by one percentage point her 6 percent negative rating in a survey done a month before.

President Arroyo is the only president to score a negative rating in the SWS polls since the fall of President Ferdinand Marcos. Her rating from the last two successive surveys represented a steep drop from the 12 percent she scored last August; it was not a high rating, since it was posted two months after she had won the bitterly contested election.

The poll rated the administration negative in the key tasks of fighting crime (from 6 percent in August to negative 12 percent), collecting taxes (from negative 2 percent when last polled in 2003 to negative 17 percent in December), and fighting inflation (from negative 43 percent in August to negative 42 percent this month).

A martyr for the environment

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

ON OCT. 14, 1991, Fr. Nery Lito Satur, parish priest of Guinoyoran, a mountain town in the heart of "NPA territory" in the province of Bukidnon, was ambushed on a lonely roadside while astride a motorcycle. A catechist who was riding with him testified that as Father Nery lay wounded, his leg pinned under the machine, she saw three men emerge from the bushes and approach the priest. Hastily scrambling away with a bullet in her thigh, the witness saw the gunmen fire three more shots into Father Nery, after which one of them started hitting the priest on the head with his rifle butt.

Though ideological and armed struggle has been a frightening part of life in Guinoyoran for over a decade, Father Nery's murder was not related to the insurgency, at least not directly. He was "murdered by greedy middle-size loggers who gained militant and ruthless stature during the rebellion." Killed for his relentless advocacy for the protection of the once-lush forests of Bukidnon, and for his outspoken denunciation of loggers and exploiters of the environment, Father Nery became one of the earliest martyrs of environmental protection.

Though his death 13 years ago was headline material, Father Nery is hardly remembered today, except perhaps by his family, by the faithful in Bukidnon, by his brother-priests and bishops. But the recent disaster in Aurora and Quezon provinces, which most everybody blames on deforestation and where another priest died trying to get back to his parish after helping residents of a low-lying barangay evacuate to safety, has made Father Nery's martyrdom "for the care of God's creation" relevant once more.

* * *

MANILA Archbishop Gaudencio Rosales was Father Nery's bishop at the time of his death. In 1997, Monsignor Rosales, writing as "Dency B. Rosales," documented the life and death of Father Nery in a book "Fr. Nery Satur and the Church He Died For" (Claretian Communication) that shares the story not just of one man's life and martyrdom, but also of a local church's "commitment to preserve life in nature," as Bukidnon Bishop Emeritus Francisco Claver, S.J., wrote in his introduction.

Shortly after the first Edsa revolt, communities around the country were galvanized into action, taking personal and collective responsibility for their lives and concerns—"people power" was brought down to the level of the barangay and the parish.

For the people of Bukidnon, particularly in the Diocese of Malaybalay, writes Rosales, this translated into a militant stand to protect the "little remaining tropical forests in the province."

Long before people in Ormoc, Nueva Ecija, Bulacan, Aurora and Quezon realized the links between the loss of the forests up in the mountains and the killer floods and mudslides, Bukidnon folk had already felt the destructive impact of deforestation.

By the early 1980s, writes the archbishop, "people were terrified by the sudden flash floods cascading down the slopes; landslides and massive mud flows after strong rains drove frightened villagers to safer grounds. The loss of top soil in farm areas washed by flash floods hastened the use of more and costly commercial fertilizers." And yet, he adds, "the connection between the destruction of the forests and lowland farming was not immediately seen." Will we let another 13 years pass and another tragedy on the scale of Infanta and Real occur before we learn the right lessons about the toll of toying with creation?

* * *

ROSALES closes his book with words we may do well to reflect on as we celebrate this joyous occasion amid so much suffering:

"Not a few people in government and many more in the Military publicly accused the Bukidnon Local Church as communistic. The NPAs saw the Church as too much pro-Government after Edsa and considered capitalism a special daughter of the Church. The rich people eyed priests as exclusively pro-poor people; the poor saw some as too close to the rich...That the Church would be attacked from any which side was torture enough for Church personnel. But the lesson was clear for the Diocese of Malaybalay. The Church must not be 'too at home' with any human institution, culture or system. It must be comfortable only with the message for man—Jesus, the Word of the Father, that it may always have the freedom to speak for the truth, justice and love in absolutely any situation.

"The fact alone that many from nearly all sectors were uneasy with the Church was in itself an encomium for the Diocese of Malaybalay, because evangelization as described by Pope Paul VI...took place only when the Church affected and disturbed people's criteria of judgment, their determining values, mental attitudes, sources of inspiration and lifestyles through the power of the Gospel.

"The truth that the Malaybalay Church saw was not nesting in any social labels, not in people's philosophy, politics nor in ideologies.

"It was in the heart of the individual where the conflicts took place. It should also be in that heart where good would ultimately have to triumph.

"Following Jesus, Lord and Saviour, the Bukidnon Local Church worked at conversion and the purification of values which took place—without exception—only in the heart. Martyrs and heroes, no matter what the breaks were in the outside world, were born from within.

"Nery Lito, his weaknesses notwithstanding, was a hero from the start and from inside him...whispering and wishing '*maayo pa sila na martyr na* (they are lucky who are already martyrs).'

"That people who hated his message of Jesus, Lord and Saviour, may be converted and be led to change from within and that those who traveled with him may be further encouraged to stay the course, God in the end granted Nery Lito's wish.

"Hail, good brother and son!

"Lead us on!"

Antonio Luna's Christmas memories

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

CONTRARY to popular belief, it is Antonio Luna's greatest misfortune to be acknowledged as one of the national heroes of the Philippines. Like Jose Rizal, he has been reduced to a statue of bronze or stone, a bit of textbook data that forever locks him in the closet of our imagination as the greatest general of the Filipino-American War. And yet, according to Teodoro Agoncillo, he never won a single battle in his career. Because textbooks have a tendency to oversimplify, heroes like Antonio Luna have to be seen in another light in order that the complexity of their lives and times can be appreciated.

Browsing through the compilation of La Solidaridad, I spotted an article on Christmas Eve in the Jan. 25, 1890 issue. It is datelined Paris, Jan. 12, 1890 and is bylined with the familiar pseudonym Taga-Ilog. The Lunas trace their roots to Ilocos Norte; the painter Juan Luna was born in Badoc, but his younger brother Antonio was born and raised in Binondo, near the Pasig River hence the pseudonym Taga-Ilog, from which we derived the term "Tagalog." Luna spent Christmas Eve 1889 in Madrid where the winter cold was made worse by his homesickness and his thoughts of Christmas in the Philippines. Luna met an old beggar on the street and instinctively put his hand into his pocket to find a coin but it was so cold the donation took some effort and he said, "And they would call this Christmas Eve when cold paralyzed even the hand which likes to give alms."

We are indebted to the late Guadalupe Fores-Ganzon who translated the first two years of La Solidaridad from the original Spanish to English; and to Bookmark that took over the project and published the entire series in parallel text. Luna's prose may be too florid for our taste today but, just to give you an idea, here is how he opened the essay:

"Delightful spring night in the capital of the Philippines—there where grey skies are covered with extensive clouds which, following the laws of condensation, descend in a cascade of slender bales of cotton threads, or in precipitate bundles of minute pieces of paper which float in space as if thrown from a balcony by the nervous hand of an irate woman."

No mention of snow, Santa Claus, and reindeer. The scientist in Luna (he was a chemist trained in the Institut Pasteur in Paris) refers to the laws of condensation! If you read on you are rewarded to a glimpse of Christmas Eve in the late 19th-century Philippines. In the cold of Europe, he pursued his memories:

"...which gladdens the soul, we took flight in imagination to a place thousands of miles away—there where the cheerful season sings of the Birth of Christ, under the thick arbor of trees which intertwine and embrace each other, and among the plants and flowers which by their perfumes intoxicate, we found ourselves seated beside a shy *dalaga* (maiden), and we inhaled the sweetness of a garland of *sampaguitas* that in graceful folds tries in vain to hide the virginal purity of her white breast."

While most Filipinos today remember Christmas Eve through their taste buds or their childhood *noche buenas*, Luna remembers Christmas through different senses. He is tired of cold and snow and longs for the tropics. Covered with a muffler and scarf, he remembers the scent of sampaguita. A musician, reputedly one of the best guitarists of his time, Luna remembers sounds:

"Again I seem to hear the sounds of a tuned orchestra of Sampaloc, of San Juan del Monte, of Pandacan wafted in undulating chords by the breezes which throb in space. It is the customary thing for the family to group together in celebration of Christmas Eve. The family members go to church to hear midnight mass; from the church to the house and then to the dance; from the dance to dinner; until exhausted by the excitement of the recreation, they sleep in the first hours of the morning.

"Artistic paper lantern imitating the Spanish escutcheon, the Star of Bethlehem, etc., with different inscriptions such as *'VIVA EL NIÑO JESUS'* and *'Esta noche es Noche Buena'* (This night is Christmas Eve), starts the parade, carried by a barefoot lad dressed in shirt and white pants, a funny handkerchief around the brow like the Aragonese custom. Eight or ten more boys, jumping happily around him threaten by their jumps and thrusts the vertical position of the lanterns which oscillates at every step. Other boys of the streets gather around and follow with their shouts of *Aba! Ta aqui ya el orquesta, ta aqui ya, ta aqui ya* (Oh! Here comes the band. It is coming...it is coming). Happy are the hearts that in experiencing the sweet impressions of music are gladdened or saddened by them. Music is the sister of sentiment; those children of the street and of ignorance feel. People who feel are not slaves.

"Behind the children come the *dalagas* and the *bagontaos*, the *tatays* and *nanays*, the fastidious aunts and at the tail end of the paraders, the orchestra playing the polkas of Fahrback, Fliege, Coote, the waltzes of Strauss, Waldteudel, Metra, the sanzas of Silos, Perez, Enriquez, Kostka and Castañeda."

The Christmas Eve in Antonio Luna's memory is so different from our own. Even the composers he mentions are unknown to me. He describes the *noche buena* party but makes no mention of food or drink. Memory can be very selective which makes history a very complicated profession.

* * *

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

Wakes, funerals and the Pinoy

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

DEATH rituals for a Christmas column? I have to admit I had many second thoughts before doing this column, but then deaths and funerals took center stage in this year's Pinoy Christmas, so it would have been even more inappropriate to shunt these events aside.

On the eve of Fernando Poe Jr.'s funeral, I got a text from ABS-CBN's Catherine Cornell, requesting if I could go to the station at 10 p.m. for a live interview about wakes and funerals in Philippine culture. Catherine has that knack for identifying new angles to a story and her request—which, unfortunately, I couldn't accommodate because of family obligations—did get me thinking about how central to our culture death is, together with its rituals.

Bear with me now as I go into a long and occasionally antiseptic explanation of death rituals before going back to FPJ.

Necropolitics

Death rituals are important in all cultures, with one main objective: a way to bring together relatives and friends for a communal coping with the feelings of grief and anxiety. The rituals vary with each culture, reflecting differences in social circumstances. Western death rituals, for example, are usually very solemn, mainly allowing expressions of grief, through ceremonies that are simple, private and brief. In contrast, many cultures, including our own, have much more elaborate and protracted death rituals, allowing as many people as possible to participate.

Our death rituals become public performances with two extended objectives. First, it is a chance for different people to establish their relationship to the deceased and to stake their claims from that relationship. One of the most dreaded fears at Filipino wakes is the sudden appearance of the deceased's (usually the male's) other families. The emergence of other wives, together with the corresponding "Juniors," is dreaded because it means there are more claimants to the inheritance, often complicating a situation where—even among the legitimate children—there are already simmering rivalries.

The second objective of these public performances is for the bereaved family to validate their status in society. From the language and style of the obituaries to the choices of coffins and a burial place, the family is conscious that they have to live up to public expectations. Failure to meet those expectations could mean losing face while a grand spectacle could boost the family's standing.

The death of a celebrity or politician is more complicated, the death rituals now taking on more public functions. Given that FPJ was both actor and politician (albeit a reluctant one), it was not surprising that his wake and funeral became, as one radio commentator put it, "a last full show." Despite appeals from Susan Roces and other relatives to leave politics out, it was inevitable that FPJ's death rituals would be so eminently political. Death sparks off politics, necropolitics, within the family; and, with a person like FPJ, throughout the nation—the mourning mixed with the jostling for status and power.

When the dead live

Filipino death rituals are noisy affairs, almost rude and blasphemous to the outsider; and they include drinking and gambling during the wake. I was myself shocked watching FPJ's funeral: you could barely hear Fr. Sonny Ramirez as he did the final prayers at the North Cemetery because the background noise was deafening, as much as you would hear in a wet market, no, in a cockpit.

Observing death rituals gives us many insights into our culture. We deal with misfortune by joking, almost as if to trivialize the bad. With death, we become celebratory, literally calling on friends to eat, drink and be merry.

It is almost as if we scoff at death, bringing the dead back to life. During FPJ's necrological services, Dolphy transformed his eulogy into a stand-up comedy act, almost poking fun at FPJ. And when former President Joseph Estrada broke out in tears while viewing FPJ's remains, the people in the church broke out in applause.

Wakes and funerals allow us to involve the dead in acting out and validating social mores. The applause that greeted Erap's weeping was a way of saying, hey, Mister Macho, it's okay, it's admirable for you, and for other men, to cry for a friend.

Our long-winded eulogies are intended not just to pay homage (*parangal*, in Filipino) to the dead, but to extol the ideal, what society wants to see among the living. This was where the eulogies for FPJ, stripped of the rhetoric, were important as a way of feeling the national pulse. Most striking was the way FPJ was praised for his loyalty to friends, his magnanimity and simplicity, three traits that I'd always thought were incompatible in a Filipino politician.

In this latest necropolitics, FPJ was presented not as FPJ alone but as a contrast to traditional politicians. The popularity of the story of FPJ's packaging relief goods and his refusing to have his name attached to the packages should be a signal to other politicians, the president especially, of how the public defines sincerity and leadership.

Mass catharsis

The massive crowd that showed up for FPJ's funeral probably included various types, including the plainly curious, Generally though, it was the poor, the dispossessed—many of them simultaneously FPJ movie fans as well as FPJ-for-president supporters—who poured into the streets.

Unlike the crowds that flooded the streets for Ninoy Aquino's funeral in August 1983, FPJ's mourners were not an angry lot, mainly because FPJ was not the victim of violence. They were discontented, certainly, but the mourners' frustrations converged with a real love for FPJ, which could help to explain why trouble did not break out. With such a large crowd, provocateurs from the government or from the opposition could have easily triggered a bloody melee, as they did with Edsa III. Wednesday's crowds were unruly and the marshals were often at wits' end trying to keep them in place, but they were also policing themselves. Our funerals may be festive, but they also have their own decorum, in deference to the deceased.

For now, President Macapagal-Arroyo should be thankful to FPJ and to Filipino culture: precisely because our oh-so-irreverent death rituals allow mourning and celebration simultaneously, FPJ's ended up as a timely safety valve, allowing mass catharsis. The poor have wept for FPJ and for themselves, and feel better—for now.

FPJ had no heir apparent, and the opposition is sharply divided by ideology as well as personal ambitions. But, again reflecting about necropolitics, it was during these nine long days of death rituals for FPJ that the nation noted the calm strength of FPJ's widow, Susan Roces. The real power play might yet be coming, now that the funeral is over.

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Useless debate on logging

I DON'T get it. Some kind of prohibition or limitation on logging has always been in place though never really enforced. We know, of course, that this is due to corruption. Why then are Malacañang and Congress wasting time debating on total or selective logging?

Shouldn't Malacañang and Congress be debating on how to end corruption instead? What's the use of new laws when they cannot be enforced because of corruption? I really don't get it. *Nakakaloko*.

Take for instance the alleged illegal logging operations in Quezon Province. Why not just send investigators there to determine what has been going on and who are involved? Once it is determined that there was indeed illegal logging there, appropriate charges should be filed against the guilty parties.

In fact, sending investigators to Quezon may not even be necessary. No illegal logging operation can ever take place without the connivance—or at least the tolerance—of the barangay chair, mayor, governor, police director, military commander and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. (The New People's Army, being an outlaw, cannot be expected to follow the law.) Malacañang and Congress can call these people and demand an explanation. A case of non-feasance, at the least, can be filed against them.

It would be fun watching them lie on TV and in Congress. Iraq has become boring. The same story of piecemeal mayhem day in, day out. Let's have once more some real action similar to the Erap impeachment!

By the way, in Cateel, Davao Oriental, there is also illegal logging. May we request Malacañang and Congress to also call the local officials, police director, military commander and DENR officials there? Just a request.

—GICO DAYANGHIRANG,
Davao City

Enough with 'trapos'

ASKED who will be the next opposition leader after the unexpected death of Fernando Poe Jr., Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile could only mumble (after a long pause) the name of ousted President Estrada who is himself barely able to defend himself against the various crimes he (Estrada) is accused of. It was a pathetic sight.

And it was an unfair statement since there are other more credible and younger opposition figures, like Sen. Panfilo Lacson or Rep. Francis Escudero who come across in their public appearances with more credibility and charisma.

For the sake of the country's future, we need a strong opposition to provide alternative programs and to serve as a counterbalance to the administration. The opposition must be led by a man (or woman) of vision and integrity. Enough with the *trapos* and recycled *politicos*.

—ED DAMES,
edames_cemg@pldtdsl.net

GMA and Ramadan

IT intrigues me that there are people who are quick in heaping criticisms but stingy when it comes to giving praises.

Our President did right in proclaiming the last day of the Ramadan—a holy day for Muslims—as a national holiday. A segment of our nation is composed of Muslims.

By this act, she showed her respect for our Muslim brothers and their traditions. Perhaps, she did this to make amends for her ill-advised decision to join the unjust war of the United States against Iraq.

—BENJAMIN C. DE LA FUENTE,
1858 Blumentritt St.,
Sta. Cruz, Manila

Chain saws regulated

THE INQUIRER recently published a letter from a reader suggesting the regulation of the use and possession of chain saws. (PDI, 12/16/04) My understanding is that Republic Act No. 9175 already provides for this, specifically:

"Sec. 7. Penal Provisions. (1) Selling, Purchasing, Re-selling, Transferring, Distributing or Possessing a Chain Saw Without a Proper Permit. Any person who sells, purchases, transfer the ownership, distributes or otherwise disposes or possesses a chain saw without first securing the necessary permit from the Department shall be punished with imprisonment of four (4) years, two (2) months and one (1) day to six (6) years or a fine of not less than Fifteen thousand pesos (P15,000.00) but not more thirty thousand pesos (30,000.00) or both at the discretion of the court, and the chain saw/s confiscated in favor of the government."

The act also contains additional and more severe penal provisions for actual unlawful use of a chain saw.

—BILL MITCHELL,
bill.mitchell@pobox.com

Face-saving political gimmickry

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo's suspension of all logging permits appears to be a face-saving political gimmick, not an honest-to-goodness drive to protect the fragile environment.

Barely a week before the calamity, Ms Arroyo was lauding the Supreme Court's volte-face decision granting transnational mining companies legal mandate to engage in the large-scale plunder of our mineral resources.

The government says that mining will bring forth a better life for the poor. This is belied by the experiences of many affected communities that have seen mining cause ecological degradation, displacement of indigenous peoples, greater suffering and deprivation and devastation. Even the recently concluded Extractive Industry Review (EIR) commissioned by the World Bank confirmed that mining contributed to greater poverty rather than eased it.

The argument citing "sound mining practices" is just propaganda as the mining industry continues to inflict destruction on communities around the world. The most recent reported damage is the poisoning of Buyat Bay in Indonesia, the site of a submarine tailing disposal. And we must not forget the mining disaster in Marinduque, where mine tailings continue to poison people. If we call unscrupulous loggers terrorists, what do we call the mining firm that threatened the survival of the people of Marinduque?

The government's suspension of commercial logging while it promotes large-scale mining is simply inconsistent and utterly ridiculous. The need to keep our national policies on environmental protection consistent has become all the more necessary in the face of recent calamities.

We, in Oriental Mindoro, express our opposition to the mining operation in our watershed. We call on the collective force of the Church and civil society to join the struggle of our people against the far graver threat of mining disasters posed by the Supreme Court's pro-mining decision and the Arroyo administration's aggressive pro-mining policies. Indeed, How many more need to suffer devastation before we come to our senses?

—FR. EDWIN A. GARIGUEZ,
Mangyan Mission,
St. Augustine Seminary,
SVD Road, Tagaytay City

On the outburst of Susan Roces

VOICES ON INQ7.NET

SUSAN, may you stay strong and keep your dignity, and please remain with the people who believed in your husband, Fernando Poe Jr. I heard the remarks that you made about ABS-CBN and the station deserves to get it from you.

ABS-CBN, you should be fair and honest with the Filipino people. I hope you would come to realize that the day might come that nobody would patronize your station anymore.—**May Gallardo, 47 Ave. B, NY NY 10009**

* * *

I can understand the grief of Susan Roces. But she should have also considered that when her husband entered politics, he became public property and as such he was bound to present his ideas on how to solve the problems of the country. But he chose to remain silent and left it to his advisers to talk on the issues. Roces must face the music and be happy that some moviegoers and other politicians supported her husband.—**Jun Francisco, Los Angeles, USA**

* * *

The comments of Susan Roces and other Poe loyalists about politics and the TV stations revealed their true character. They have been shown to be power hungry individuals who want to use Poe for their personal and political interests.—**Ray Santos, Dallas, TX, USA**

* * *

I extend my condolences to Susan Roces. But I want to share my thoughts on her statement denying any plan to enter politics. What she said sounded like fighting words (in the political arena) to me. Sen. Panfilo Lacson had also said at one time that he harbored no personal ambitions about going into politics. Look where he is now.

Give Susan a few years from now and she will change her color. She will indeed run, using her husband's political platform. She might have said this as well: "There's a time for everything. Now is not the right time."—**Elmer Valeroso, Sukhumvit Soi 8, Bangkok, Thailand**

* * *

I am not an avid fan of President Macapagal-Arroyo. Neither am I a die-hard fan of Poe and Susan Roces. But Roces' hatred of the administration is exaggerated and too personal. The criticisms hurled at Poe during the electoral campaign were part of the political game and should never be taken too personally.

Leave the hatred buried with Poe and let forgiveness reign for the sake of the masses who are always used as sacrificial lambs.

Think Ms Roces, politics and show biz have transformed my beloved country into a den of thieves. It's shameful to live in the Philippines with *artistas* and *politicos* always grandstanding on TV. But it's always a pride for me to be a true Filipino who loves my country more than you and the *trapos* do.—**Er Vasol, Industrial Area, Phase 5, P. O. Box 2143, Jeddah 21451, KSA**

* * *

Why does she [Roces] remain sore over Poe's losing the May elections until now? It was not the fault of the administration that Poe died. And the cause of his death was not politics or politics-related. It was God's will. With her outburst, she projected an ugly image of herself such that instead of feeling sorry for her, people felt disappointed with her. She's not letting go of bitterness and anger in her body.—**Sylvia Gutay, Covina, California, USA**

* * *

I understand that Susan Roces is grieving over the loss of Poe, her beloved husband. But she has a very poor appreciation of what is going on in the real world. She sounded like she's blaming her enemies—who are they and for what? She should realize that criticism is the language in politics and there, one doesn't have a choice.—**George Torres, 19 Calstock Hse, Kennings Way, London SE11 4EW**

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Forest protection budget too small

P4 per hectare per year allotted vs illegal logging

SORSOGON CITY—An environmentalist group expressed fears the government would lose its battle against rampant tree-cutting in Sorsogon province with its measly budget of P4 per hectare per year for its campaign to save the country's forests, or whatever is left of them.

The Sorsogon Provincial Multi-Sectoral Forest Protection Committee made the statement after getting a briefing from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources which revealed how much the government spends in its drive to save the remaining forests in the province.

Rene Camacho, community environment and natural resources officer, said the government was spending a pittance in its campaign against illegal cutting of trees, making it too difficult for them to sustain the drive.

The computation, he said, was based on the salaries of the forest guards employed by the government and the amount allocated for maintenance and funds for other operating expenses being used for the anti-illegal logging campaign.

Camacho disclosed that in Sorsogon province, each forest guard covers 7,217 hectares of forest lands, making it virtually impossible for them to wage an effective campaign against illegal tree cutters.

Ideal ratio

The ideal ratio is one forest guard for every 500 hectares.

Sorsogon has 36,088 hectares of forest lands but it only has five forest guards, one of whom is a disabled man and who is just awaiting retirement.

Aside from the lack of personnel, the DENR here also suffers from lack of mobility with only one rundown vehicle available, which is no match to the vans and the trucks being used by transporters of illegally-cut lumber.

Oscar Dominguez, provincial environment and natural resources officer, admitted that the DENR was really having a hard time apprehending illegal lumber dealers and furniture makers as these are beyond their "visitorial" powers.

Dominguez said they have to secure first a search warrant before they could get into the premises of illegal lumber dealers and furniture makers to confiscate their lumber.

Such process is considered tedious by DENR personnel and somehow discourages them from pursuing those involved in the illegal lumber trade.

There are also no DENR personnel who could conduct regular patrols along the routes believed to be used by illegal loggers in the wee hours of the morning, Dominguez said.

"We only have a checkpoint near the Sorsogon-Albay boundary during office hours," he added.

Cases

A WOMAN in Infanta, Quezon prepares for the holidays despite the tragedy that befell her town and other areas in Quezon and Aurora provinces that were hit by successive typhoons.

PDI PHOTO

Despite this, Dominguez said, they have "a good number" of cases filed in court against suspected illegal loggers in the province.

He also assured that Sorsogon is still lucky as it still has sufficient forest cover, though the forests are mostly second growth and mossy.

He said most pieces of lumber being sold in the province are being taken from private lands, which have Special Private Land Timber Permits (SPLTPs) or Private Land Timber Permits (PLTPs).

Dominguez, however, admitted that the tedious process in applying for SPLTPs and PLTPs as well as the high fees being paid for by applicants for the permits are discouraging landowners from seeking them.

He said applicants pay P3,000 per cubic meter for permits for premium lumber and P900 for non-premium species.

Aside from the fees, the applicant also has to secure a certification from the barangay captain where the trees are located, attesting that new trees have been planted in the area as replacements.

Tedious process

He also has to secure a written certification from the mayor that he has no objection to the cutting, and from the governor, a written permission to cut the trees.

Dominguéz said this process ensures that local officials are fully aware of the cutting of trees in their area and the DENR alone should not be blamed should illegal logging continue. *Bobby Labalan, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

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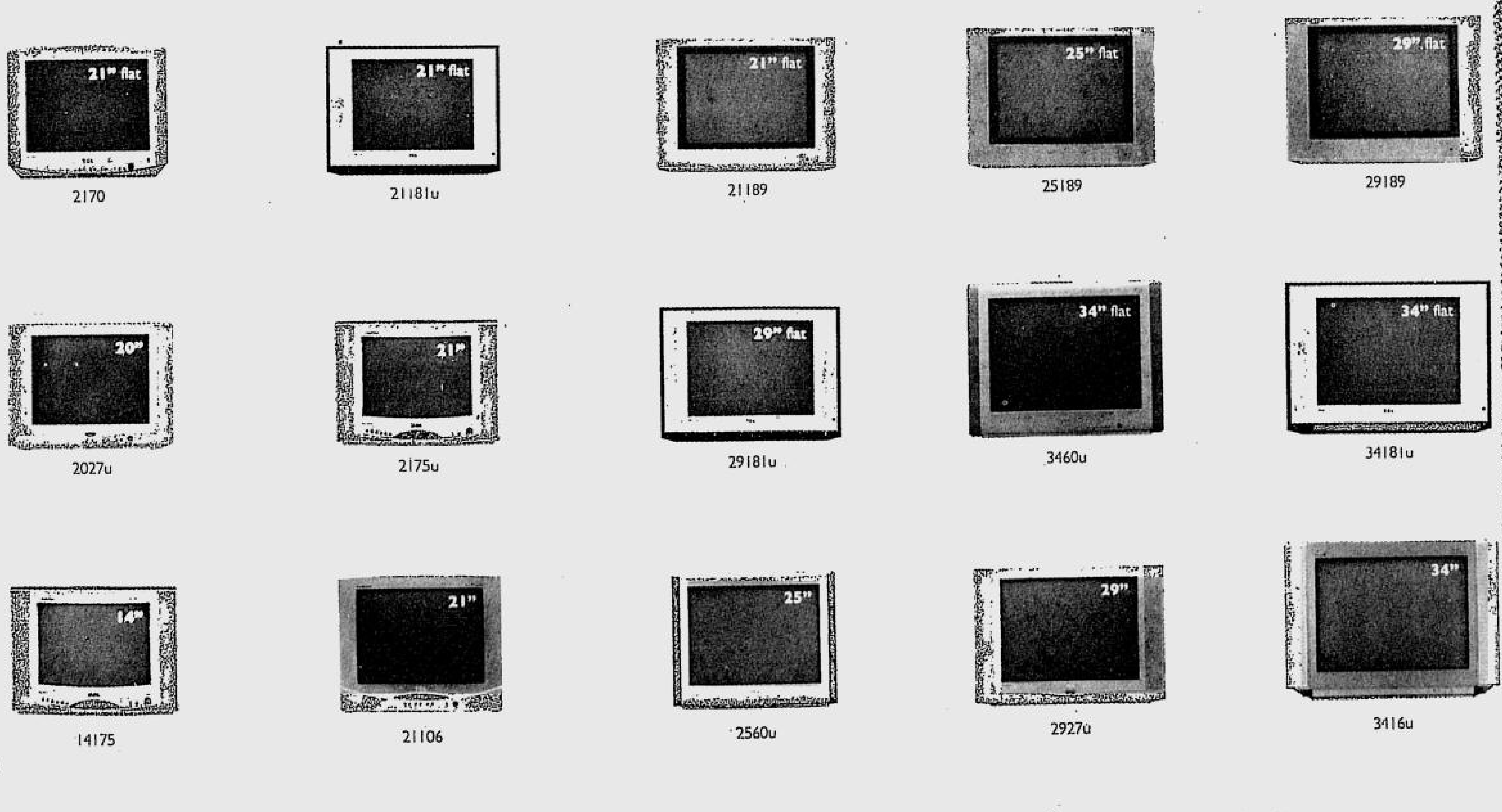

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Peace panels meet quietly in Malaysia

COTABATO CITY—Negotiators from the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) quietly met in Kuala Lumpur on Monday, during which both sides agreed to resume the stalled formal peace negotiations as soon as possible, a rebel official said yesterday.

"Formal talks, stalled since middle of last year, are expected to resume in January," Ghazali Jaafar, MILF political affairs chief, said.

During the meeting, the sixth of the exploratory talks, the panels, headed by chief government negotiator Silvestre Afable and MILF chief negotiator Mohaqher Iqbal, discussed one of the contentious issues in the path to peace in Mindanao.

In a statement, Maulana Bobby Alonto, a member of the MILF peace panel, said the parties agreed to move forward "to remove some thorny issues that hindered the resumption of (the) stalled formal peace negotiations."

Alonto, describing the recent peace talks as progressive, said that a number of substantial issues have been resolved during the recent exploratory talks.

"On top of the agenda was the Ancestral Domain Aspect of the Tripoli Agreement on Peace of 2001," which the parties recognized, Alonto said.

Alonto said the parties also agreed to activate their respective technical committees and subdivided these into four technical working groups (TWG) to meet and draw up working papers on the following components: Concept of Ancestral Domain, Territory, Governance, and Resources.

Afable and Iqbal, he said, also adopted a set of interim guidelines to "isolate and interdict criminal groups and syndicates" in Mindanao.

Alonto said it was a significant step in the panels' joint efforts to immediately put in operation the Ad Hoc Joint Action Group (AHJAG).

The AHJAG would formalize the active participation of MILF fighters in running after lawless elements in the guerrillas' area of operation in Mindanao.

Malacanang and the military have repeatedly accused the MILF of providing sanctuaries to operatives of the Jemaah Islamiya and the Abu Sayyaf.

The peace negotiators also acted favorably on the non-government organizations' desire for an observer status in the peace negotiations, according to Jaafar.

He said the guidelines governing the accreditation, participation and conduct of observers during the formal peace talks have also been adopted.

During the recent exploratory talks, the government and MILF peace panels acknowledged the significant contribution of the International Monitoring Team (IMT) in the enforcement of an agreement to cease hostilities in Mindanao.

The appreciation was particularly extended to the leaders of Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam and Libya for sending in peacekeepers "because it really helped prevent clashes." *Edwin Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

TOOTS SOBERANO/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS
The colors of the holiday season start to fill the night sky on Freedom Avenue in Clark, Pampanga as lanterns of different sizes and shapes are put out to cheer residents and visitors.

Bishop tells troops, rebels: Give us peaceful Xmas

BACOLOD CITY—Bacolod Bishop Vicente Navarra has called on the government and rebel forces not to violate their holiday ceasefire, and give everyone a peaceful Christmas.

"As we celebrate the birth of Christ I appeal to all to respect human lives and veer away from violent encounters," Navarra said on Wednesday.

The appeal came three days after a soldier and two rebels were killed in a clash on Monday between government forces and members of the New People's Army (NPA) in Isabela town, Negros Occidental.

Six soldiers were also wounded during the exchange of gunfire, which lasted for two hours. The military claimed that the encountered foiled the NPA's plan to launch an offensive in Isabela and nearby Binalbagan town.

Both the government and the communist rebels have declared a cessation of hostility during the holiday season.

The government's ceasefire will last for three weeks—from Dec. 16 to Jan. 5 next year. The rebel Christmas truce will be for 10 days—from Dec. 23 to Jan. 2.

Navarra said Christmas is about exultation, hope, faith and trust in God despite the calamities that hit the nation and the current hardships being experienced by the people.

"I assure the people of my prayers and of always being at hand to help them," he said, stressing that he wants Christ to be present in the lives of all.

"Christmas, to my mind, is about sharing to make a difference in the lives of our fellowmen," said Negros Occidental Gov. Joseph Marañon.

This is true, he added, when taken in the context of how life was in 2004.

"We were witnesses to a lot of adversities both man-made and natural. Yet we too have so much to be thankful about for the blessings we too received by God's design," he said.

Negotiations for peace between the government and communist guerrillas were stalled following the listing of the Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army as terrorist organizations. *Carla Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau*

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Held last December 22, 2004, PDI Executives headed by President & CEO Sandy Romualdez (center) were at hand to draw the winners for Inquirer's Guyito Wild Hunt Promo. Also present were (from left to right) VP-Marketing Donald Lim, VP-Information Technology Garry Libby, SVP-Sales & Marketing Rene Reinoso, DTI Representative Virgilio Lamano, VP-Advertising Felipe Olarte and Associate Editor Abel Ulanday.

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Former general becoming most powerful man in Subic freeport

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

GENERAL Calimlim in 2000: Hot on the trail of smugglers then and now. PDI FILE PHOTO

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT—A retired general is emerging as this freeport's most powerful man as a new team takes control of managing the former American naval base and this other pillar of the Subic-Clark Growth Corridor.

Retired Maj. Gen. Jose Calimlim has joined the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority and is taking on several positions and tasks.

As the SBMA senior deputy administrator for operations, retired Maj. Gen. Jose Calimlim oversees two major infrastructures: The Subic Bay International Airport and the Subic Bay Seaport.

Calimlim is also president of the Freeport Services Corp., a government-owned and controlled firm which provides SBMA with personnel now totaling 1,800.

The retired general (a member of the Philippine Military Academy Class 1968) is also chief of the SBMA's law enforcement, intelligence and investigation department.

On top of those jobs, he is also head of the SBMA's Task Force Anti-Smuggling, which President Macapagal-Arroyo created through Executive Order No. 384.

Can he get any powerful than that?

Calimlim said the reorganization instituted by SBMA Administrator Alfredo Antonio since the October takeover delineated those duties to him.

During a roundtable discussion with INQUIRER Central Luzon correspondents on Dec. 18, Calimlim admitted that his military background and the presence of other military men at the zone may have created the impression that Subic has turned into a garrison state.

Under the administration of ousted President Joseph Estrada, Calimlim was also key in anti-smuggling efforts, even raiding a suspected base of smuggling operations in a province controlled by a former friend of the ousted president.

Calimlim said in less than three months, he has gathered information on containers bound for Clark that are diverted to Makati and Manila.

He said oil products are misdeclared to skirt the payment of taxes.

But asked on who the active smugglers were at Subic, Calimlim was tight-lipped, saying that identifying them would malign even their children.

Malpractices

First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo, whose name is always dropped in smuggling operations, has no involvement whatsoever in smuggling at Subic, Calimlim said.

"Every time these people use his name, I call up FG (Arroyo). And he told me that he did not consent or he did not want his name to be used . . . although he knew some of them, they were old acquaintances," Calimlim said.

President Macapagal-Arroyo, he said, also gave him clear instructions. "She said (we should arrest) people who use Mike, Mikey (Pampanga Rep. Juan Miguel Arroyo) or any member of the family. That's the instruction of the President."

He said he knows how things are done at the freeport.

"It's very difficult to really pinpoint who are doing this because sometimes these people are just being used. They are consignees, brokers. Frankly speaking, I don't know (who's behind the irregularities)," he said.

Although the anti-smuggling drive has started, Chiqui Lacson, SBMA senior deputy administrator for business, said importation has not been stopped or delayed.

Companies have been importing through pre-approved import permits issued by the administration of former Subic chief executive Felicito Payumo before the court issued an injunction on the order.

Those permits are due to expire on Dec. 31, she said.

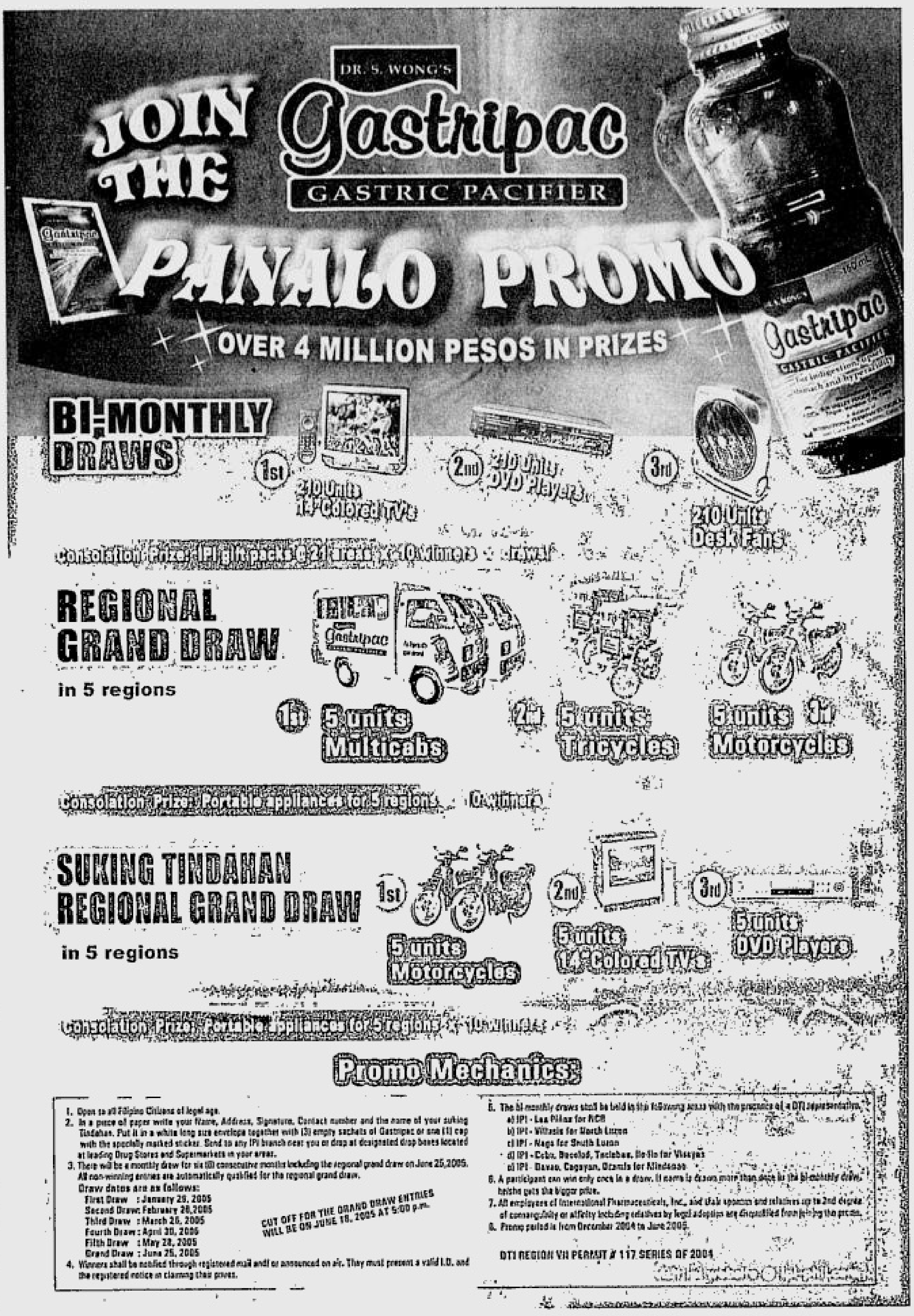
Expertise

As the SBMA is hot on the trails of smugglers, SBMA administrator Antonio said the new SBMA board possesses diverse expertise. He said this expertise will matter in pushing Subic as an investment hub and that it should be in terms of importation, manufacturing for exports, logistics, warehousing and eco-tourism.

By mid-2005, Antonio said the new board would have crafted a strategic plan built on the potentials of the freeport: Its location, the infrastructures and human resources.

"What is important is we're moving forward, and making gains. We came in because we felt we could make a contribution. And that is our motivating force. We will try to make a difference here because our country needs it," Antonio said.

As for the retired general in whose hands the tasks are many and crucial: "*Kawawa naman ang gobyerno kung di natin tutulungan* (The government would look pitiful if we will not help it)," Calimlim said.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   e) IPI - Davao, Cagayan, Ozamis for Mindanao
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Metro Manila South
MC Home Depot - Fort Bonifacio
MRT 3 Ayala

Luzon North
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Perez - Dagupan
Cauayan - Isabela
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Sanciangco - Cabanatuan
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Magallanes - Cebu City
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Opposition awaits FPJ widow's plans

By Carlito Pablo

THE DIRECTION of the opposition orphaned by Fernando Poe Jr. will depend to a great extent on the plans of his widow, Susan Roces.

"She's the inspiration of the opposition right now," former Sen. Francisco "Kit" Tatad said yesterday in a phone interview. "We will wait for word on what she wants to do. We have to respect her desire."

Asked whether the opposition would support Roces if she embarks on a political career to fill the void left by its standard-bearer, Tatad said the matter was "still hypothetical."

To the question of whether the opposition now considered itself leaderless with Poe's death, Tatad said: "We have not chosen a paramount leader but the opposition has many leaders."

He said the opposition's "prime concern" had been Poe's "peaceful and solemn burial."

"It was also the wish of Susan, and we respected that," he added.

Tatad, who tried but failed to reclaim his Senate seat during the May elections and who is among President Macapagal-Arroyo's harshest critics, said the opposition would have to discuss "directions" within the next few days.

The possibility of Roces filling Poe's shoes was raised as early as the campaign for the presidential election.

At that time, there was talk that had Poe been disqualified from running for president on grounds that he was supposedly not a natural-born Filipino, Roces would have assumed the role of opposition standard-bearer.

Immediately after Poe's death on Dec. 14, Sen. Edgardo Angara was also quoted as saying something to the effect.

PAGPAPATULO
NAMIN
ANG
LABAN
MO

A FAN of the late actor Fernando Poe Jr. who was not able to witness the burial of his idol light candles for him at his tomb. JOAN BONDOC

Opposition senators mock oust-GMA plot

From page A1

of a dead person, and they are concocting all these stories, then they have something to fear.

"What do they have to fear from a dead man? Only those persons who have sinned have something to fear."

But according to Gonzalez, he is not a person "who cries 'Wolf!'"

"My basis is intelligence information, which I consider to be credible," he said at a press briefing, later pulling out from a drawer a document marked "Confidential" and showing it to reporters.

He added: "I have my own intelligence unit here, and what we [do] is we cross-check with other intelligence agencies. But I draw my own conclusion. I am not an expert in intelligence, but we study the intelligence. I am a reserve colonel, so I know."

Gonzalez appeared on national TV on Wednesday morning and warned of a conspiracy for an "Edsa-type uprising." He said it was still "evolving."

He claimed that intelligence agents intercepted four conversations between an Army colonel and an opposition lawyer on the alleged plan to oust Ms Arroyo.

He maintained that the plot was for real, saying, for instance, that the route taken by the funeral march—Espana Avenue-A.H. Lacson Avenue-Dimasalang Street—was adopted at the last minute because the original plan was for the march not to pass the Mabuhay Rotunda, "a route that is close to Malacañang."

'Name names'

Senators Jinggoy Estrada and Edgardo Angara called on Gonzalez and other Malacañang officials not to engage in a witch hunt and to immediately identify the leaders of the supposed plot.

"He should name names," said Estrada, the eldest son of ousted President Joseph Estrada.

Angara aired a similar remark, saying it was incumbent on the accusers to name the accused and provide proof.

Pimentel said the allegation was "an insult and disservice to the millions of people from all walks of life who endured a physical ordeal to pay their last respects to Fernando Poe Jr., without any intention of committing any act that might ruin the solemnity of the occasion or stain his legacy."

He said he saw no motive behind the disclosure of the supposed plot except to "disparage the massive show of public support and affection for the opposition's standard-bearer, who is widely acknowledged as the real winner in the last presidential election."

Downgraded alert

Despite Gonzalez's warning, the Philippine National Police downgraded its alert status to heightened level effective Wednesday midnight.

PNP Director General Edgar Aglipay made the decision to allow policemen to rest during the holidays, especially after the peaceful burial of Poe, Senior Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil, PNP spokesperson, said yesterday.

He said the decision was also prompted by the Communist Party of the Philippines' declaration of a 10-day ceasefire to reciprocate the 20-day truce previously declared by Malacañang.

"The situation is generally peaceful nationwide, so policemen can now take time off to spend Christmas with their family," he said.

Bataoil said he had no knowledge of the plot announced by Gonzalez.

But he said police intelligence operatives were now coordinating with Gonzalez and other agencies to verify the report and, if necessary, take action.

"We respect whatever information is gathered by other government agencies," he told reporters.

But even PNP intelligence director Robert Delfin said on Wednesday that he knew nothing of the alleged plot.

"What we know is that there is a [New People's Army] liquidation squad now in Metro Manila to kill top military and police officers and politicians in the NPA hit list," he told the INQUIRER.

AFP, too

The Armed Forces also lowered its red alert to white alert, the lowest alert level in the military, following the peaceful funeral march for Poe.

But it is monitoring the movements of two colonels involved in the supposed destabilization plot, according to Lt. Col. Buenaventura Pascual, chief of the AFP Public Information Office.

Pascual, however, declined to name the colonels and to specify their involvement in the alleged plot.

He also justified the swift downgrading of the AFP's alert status by saying that "the threat has already decreased" and "the normalcy of the situation in the National Capital Region was restored."

'Very volatile'

Tagle said that even at the height of the funeral march, there had never been a change of plan or talk of storming Malacañang.

"There was no plan to do anything like that, nor did I heard anyone speak of doing that," said Tagle, who had marched near the carriage carrying Poe's casket.

She said the huge turnout on Wednesday was a "vindication" for Poe's bereaved family and for herself.

But Gonzalez described the conditions at the funeral as "very volatile, very emotional."

"So many rabble-rousers there. So many inflammatory statements have been made. So many fanatical people. Any small thing that will happen there will create a lot of fire," he said, adding:

"It doesn't need explanation that at the height of the FPJ thing, there was really a crisis situation. No one [knew] what was at the back of their mind."

But before noon on Wednesday, hours after the funeral, PNP chief Aglipay said the hundreds of policemen put on standby on the streets near the funeral route could go home.

He also praised the Poe camp's marshals and organizers, saying they had done a great job of keeping their ranks in order.

No charges

With the crisis having "dissipated," the Department of Justice is not considering filing charges against those involved in the plot, Gonzalez said.

He acknowledged that the military and police had "already downgraded the situation."

"It's a fact that the situation has calmed down," he said. "If you start doing these things (filing charges), even if it's legally correct, you'll get attacked left and right by so-called human rights advocates."

But he insisted that the threat remained: "The problem about people who are continuing to feel adventurism is still there. I would reiterate my statement that they are targeting Feb. 25 or May 1."

Gonzalez scoffed at warnings that he could be charged with wire-tapping for listening in on the conversations of the alleged plotters.

"If you are a party line to a telephone, you may listen," he said. "If incidentally you are able to listen to a discussion with somebody not your wife, that is not wire-tapping. That is the Supreme Court decision. Wire-tapping is if you intentionally tap a telephone to listen."

On Pimentel's remark that the plot was a mere product of his imagination, Gonzalez said: "If Mr. Pimentel does not know what I know, he can probably say that. Because some people are always pessimistic about statements coming from the administration. But I am not a person who cries 'Wolf!' then allows the wolf to come."

Thing of the past

Poe supporters vowed to continue their quest for the truth in the May presidential election, but denied allegations that they were ready to launch another Edsa-like uprising.

"Edsa is a thing of the past. *Wala nang susunod na* Edsa," Rez Cortez, head of the National Coordinating Council of Volunteers for FPJ, said hours before Poe's funeral.

Cortez said his group would focus its energies on Poe's protest case lodged before the Presidential Electoral Tribunal because "we believe FPJ has the legal claim" to the presidency.

"We cannot accept what they are saying, that the case has become moot and academic because FPJ is dead," said Butch Cadsawan, leader of the FPJ Movement for President.

But Cadsawan said his group was still unclear about its future plans. "It's too early to say. We have just lost our leader," he said sadly.

"What is important is for the truth [about the election] to come out," he added. *With reports from Christian V. Esguerra, Alcuin Papa and Fe Zamora*

Local body to decide payment for Naia-3 builders

From page A1

the government of breaking the law in expropriating the terminal, and dismissed the down payment as insufficient.

Fraport repeated its demands for financial compensation in a long-running legal battle that is currently before the World Bank's International Center for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID).

In a separate statement, Piatco lawyer Liwayway Vinzons-Chato warned that the government could vandalize the terminal "to manipulate the compensation that would be eventually adjudicated."

She said the government had acted in "bad faith" by taking over the terminal, even while negotiations with the consortium were still being pursued.

The government, backed by the Supreme Court, earlier annulled the operating contract with Piatco, saying the 1998 document signed by the previous government of Joseph Estrada had been disadvantageous to the government.

The terminal has been left unused since major building work was virtually completed in 2002.

Two senators from opposite sides of the political fence called for the opening of the terminal, but they said Piatco and Fraport must be paid just compensation.

Administration Sen. Richard Gordon said he favored the immediate opening of Naia-3 because the country "badly needs a modern airport to boost tourism and economic activities."

Gordon, chair of the Senate committee on government corporations and enterprises, recognized that state had the power to expropriate assets in the interest of the public.

However, he cautions that the expropriation of the terminal by the government might send a wrong signal to international investors, who might balk at doing business in the country again—afraid to suffer the same fate of Naia-3's builders.

To reassure international investors, Gordon asked Malacañang to pay full and just compensation to the consortium that built the terminal within the six months that it intends to finish work at Naia-3 to make it operational.

He also stressed that government should operate the facility only until after it had fully paid the consortium.

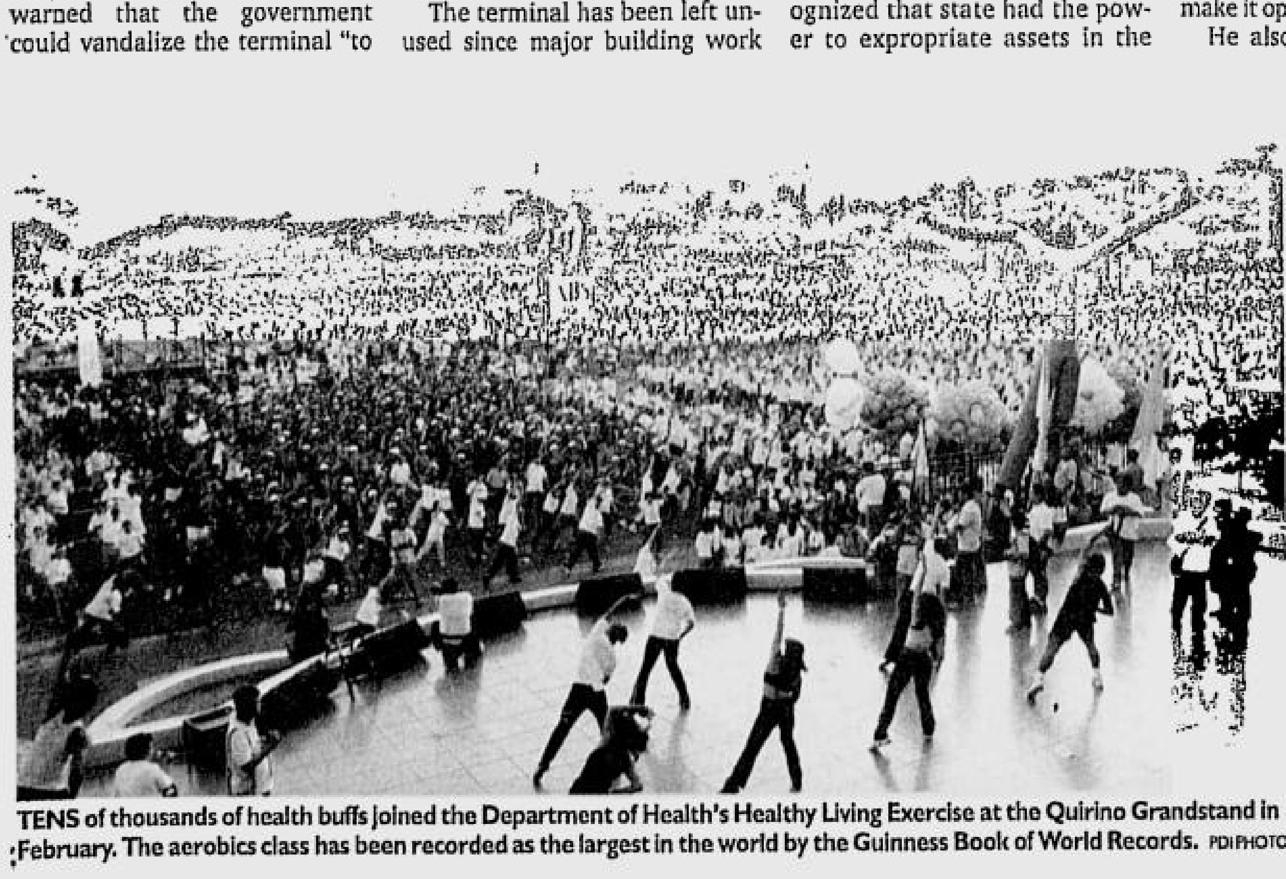
Opposition Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile also stressed the need to immediately open the airport.

But the government must study the takeover's impact on foreign investment, relations with countries involved in the project and commitment under international treaty, which Fraport is now invoking to protect its interests, Enrile said.

He said the country could face sequestration of its assets abroad should the final ruling by the ICSID favor the consortium. He said expropriation was subject to the payment of just compensation.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said President Macapagal-Arroyo was "heartened by the overwhelming positive response" to the takeover of Naia-3 from different sectors.

Bunye said the President had ordered the Office of the Solicitor General to continue its efforts to reach an amicable settlement to reimburse Piatco and Fraport for their investments. *Reports from AFP, Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Michael Lim Ubac*



TENS of thousands of health buffs joined the Department of Health's Healthy Living Exercise at the Quirino Grandstand in February. The aerobics class has been recorded as the largest in the world by the Guinness Book of World Records. PDI PHOTO

Guinness lists RP ...

From page A1

"Largest Aerobics Demonstration/Class."

The country holds other Guinness World Records, such as Most Couples Kissing Simultaneously, Longest Snake, Longest Horns, Smallest Freshwater Fish, Shortest Adult Actor in a Leading Role, Most Widespread Computer Virus, Largest Papal Crowd and Largest Shoes.

"We did it, but it would not have been possible if not for the all-out support from different sectors, such as the academe, business, pharmaceuticals group, the nongovernment organizations and other government agencies," Dayrit said in a statement.

The mass aerobics exercise kicked off the national healthy lifestyle campaign spearheaded by the Department of Health to prevent the emerging lifestyle diseases, which are among the top causes of death in the Philippines.

Simultaneous aerobics demonstrations were also held in Davao, gathering 10,500 participants, and in Cebu, with 23,000 people.

The 48,188 participants recorded in Manila was actually lower than the estimated 100,000 that flocked to the Quirino Grandstand for the event.

The government's healthy lifestyle campaign, dubbed "Mag-HL Tayo!" integrates the DOH's antismoking program, regular physical activity and weight control, healthy diet and nutrition, stress management and regular checkup.

Dayrit said the campaign emphasized the need for Filipinos to practice a healthy lifestyle and for policymakers to provide an environment supportive of healthy lifestyle practices.

Exercising moderately 30 minutes a day can reduce the risk of developing degenerative diseases of the heart, liver and kidney, diabetes, hypertension and cancer, according to health experts.

Heart disease killed 55,830 Filipinos in 1998, making it the leading cause of mortality in the country. Cancer ranked fourth; diabetes, eighth; and kidney failure, 10th.

The DOH noted that many of the leading causes of death among Filipinos were lifestyle diseases that could have been avoided with the observance of a healthy lifestyle.

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Editor Ester G. Dipasupil ■ Assistant Editor Cenon B. Bibe

Xmas not merry for judge

By Luige A. del Puerto

CHRISTMAS Day would be anything but merry for Judge Julia Reyes of the Pasig City Metropolitan Trial Court.

The Supreme Court, in an en banc decision, suspended Reyes on Dec. 14. The order, which came out Wednesday, was issued following complaints of abuse of power by Prosecutor Romana Reyes, branch stenographer Armi Flordeliza, and clerk of court Timoteo Migrino.

Judge Reyes had sent all three court workers to jail in the last few weeks.

"The Court resolved, upon the recommendation of the Court Administrator, to preventively suspend Judge Julia R. Reyes as Presiding Judge of MTC Branch 69, Pasig City, effective immediately and until further orders from this court," the one-page decision said.

Just this month, Reyes ordered the police to arrest Prosecutor Reyes (not a relation) for indirect contempt of court. The prosecutor earned the judge's ire after failing to follow an order to submit for inquest a case against Migrino, who was sent to jail for allegedly gambling inside the court premises.

Prosecutor Reyes had failed to appear in court several times, but she said she was at the hospital at the time for a heart problem.

Flordeliza was cited by the judge for refusing to obey an order.

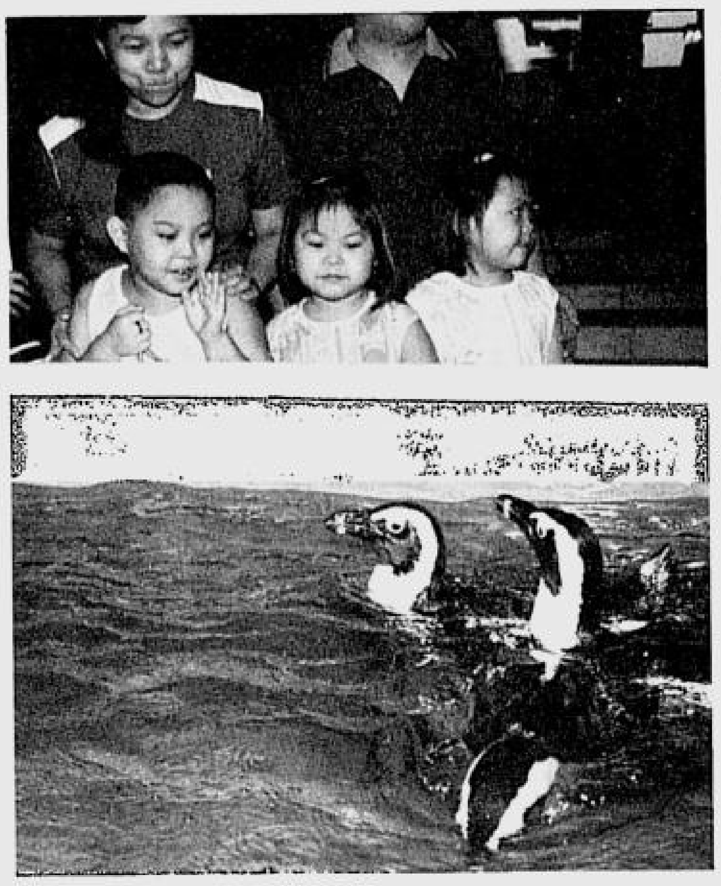
Judge Reyes had also ordered the detention of a lawyer and a woman who declined to be identified for contempt of court.

Reacting to the decision, the judge said: "I can't imagine I was suspended while those I have complained against were not."

She added that the metropolitan court had already struck out her name from the payroll.

Number coding scheme lifted

Good, bad news on expressways



NOT BATMAN'S NEMESIS BOY CABRIDO

Children view with delight three of six year-old penguins brought to the country by Ecos Environmental Foundation, a nongovernment, environmental organization which is holding a summit in Manila for the protection of the ozone layer. The penguins are on display in Harrison Plaza, Manila.

By Margaux C. Ortiz and Clarissa S. Batino

GO AHEAD, drive.

The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) said yesterday that the number coding scheme would be suspended today, Dec. 27, 30 and 31.

"These were declared holidays and the number coding scheme is automatically suspended on such special days," said Angelito Vergel de Dios, executive director of the MMDA Traffic Operations Center.

Vergel de Dios cautioned motorists that they were expecting heavy traffic this afternoon until late evening because of people doing their last-minute shopping.

Although the roads may be less congested for the rest of the holidays, Vergel de Dios said traffic could be problematic around malls and carnivals.

On the South Luzon and North Luzon Expressways, toll collection will be briefly suspended, the Philippine National Construction Corp. (PNCC) announced yesterday.

PNCC said it would not collect fees from 10 p.m. of Dec. 24 until 6 a.m. of Dec. 25. The eight-hour respite would be repeated on Dec. 31 to Jan. 1.

But that is where the good news ends.

Effective 6 a.m. of Jan. 1, the PNCC would be collecting higher toll fees along the SLEX.

The toll rates along the NLEX are unchanged until the Lopez-owned consortium completes the upgrade of the highway early next year.

The PNCC had sought a 29-centavo per kilometer hike in toll fees along the SLEX, but the Toll Regulatory Board only approved a 4-centavo per kilometer increase, which would raise fees to 56 centavos per kilometer.

The PNCC said it wanted to increase the toll fee per kilometer along the SLEX to 81 centavos from the current 52 centavos per km.

At the same time, the tollway regulator allowed the PNCC Skyway Corp. to increase the toll fee along the Skyway by P10 and the PEA Tollway Corp. to hike the rate by P3 effective Jan. 1.

"We are not happy with the increase the TRB gave us. It is very insufficient. We will ask them to reconsider," said PNCC chair Pastor Ramos in an earlier interview.

PNCC spokesperson Cheche Chavez said the state-run toll operator also asked the TRB to allow the NLEX to raise the fee to 71 centavos per kilometer.

But the TRB said it would just wait for the petition of the Manila North Tollways Corp., the Lopez-led joint venture with the PNCC which is set to take over operations of the NLEX in early 2005.

MNTC had said that toll fees along the NLEX could go up by about 380 percent once it takes over the expressway to allow the private group to recover its $371 million investment and to pay its creditors.

"The agreement with the TRB was that we would reduce the toll increase this year provided they would allow us to recover in 2005. We originally asked for 72 centavos but they asked us to rollback to 52 centavos," noted Ramos.

The TRB said toll fees would go up by P10 along the Skyway and by P3 along Coastal Road for cars and jeeps. The resulting increases would double for buses and trucks and triple for large trucks and trailers.

Manila court junks suit vs Noli

By Tarra V. Quismundo

WHAT better Yuletide gift to give the country's No. 2 man?

Maybe this one that came through an order dated Dec. 20 from a Manila court dismissing a P150 million civil suit filed against Vice President Noli de Castro.

Through an order dated Dec. 20, Manila Regional Trial Court Branch 36 Judge Wilfredo Reyes threw out a complaint against de Castro filed less than a month before the May elections by a man claiming to have been implicated in a crime by the former broadcaster in his television show, Magandang Gabi Bayan.

Rafael Engle, detained for more than seven years before he was acquitted of the murder and kidnapping of his wife in January 2003, filed the civil suit against de Castro in April 21.

In his civil suit that sought a payback for what he had called a life ruined by De Castro, the former businessman alleged that a television episode aired in September 1995 by De Castro had put him in a bad light, and made it appear that he was the mastermind in the kidnapping and killing of his wife.

But Reyes said the case lacked factual and legal basis. Engle's arrest for his wife's kidnapping and murder, the court said, was based not on that episode of De Castro's program, but on evidence that the National Bureau of Investigation had gathered.

The court also said that the damage suit was filed too late, as the period allowed by law for such a case to be filed in court and be pursued later in a trial had lapsed five years ago.

Gift explodes, hurts doctor in Makati City

By Margaux C. Ortiz

BE CAREFUL what you open this Christmas.

Joselito Sinchioco, 42, an obstetrician and gynecologist at ADSEM Building, No. 18 J.P. Rizal Ext., Barangay Cembo, was hurt when a gift wrapped bomb exploded in his hand.

Police said an unidentified man delivered the gift.

A note on the box said, "Merry Christmas. From Angel."

The unsuspecting doctor removed the wrapping and was cutting the tape when it blew up.

Police said the box contained two batteries, wires, electrical tape, styrofoam and a shattered black plastic container that had contained firecracker powder.

Because of the incident, a police official warned people against receiving gifts from unknown sources.

Only 2 firemen responded

By Nancy C. Carvajal

FIRE victims were enraged Wednesday night when two firemen armed with a leaky hose were the first to come to their call.

Clarita Bautista, owner of the gutted two-story duplex at 67 Carmen St., Sta. Rita Village, said her house could have been saved had the firemen responded properly.

She related that a lone fireman and the firetruck driver from the City Fire Department arrived within minutes after the fire broke out at about 10:30 p.m. inside a room on the second floor of her house.

The blaze was sparked by an old television set that reportedly blew up after it was left on for a long time.

"Instead of rushing to put out the fire, the lone fireman took his own sweet time," Bautista said.

"There was no sense or urgency (in the fireman)," she lamented.

And when the fireman got to turn on the hose, little water came out because the hose was riddled with leaks.

The arrival of volunteer firemen from the Chinese community did little to save Bautista's home, which by then was already gutted.

Later, Parañaque fire marshal Leonides Perez arrived at the scene. Witnesses said he appeared to be drunk.

He was caught on video giggling by a television crew of GMA 7.

"The fire was already under control when I was joking with volunteer firemen," Perez told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview. Damage was put at P1.5 million.

Yesterday afternoon, fire also erupted at the Solid Laguna Plastics Corporation factory along the East Service Road in Sucat, Parañaque.

Employees of the factory owned by a certain Elena Lim were reportedly having their Christmas party when the blaze began.

Over in Makati, a section of the National Homes Mortgage Finance Corporation office at 104 Amorsolo Street, Legaspi Village, burned in an hourlong incident before dawn yesterday.

SFO1 Reynaldo Gonzales said security guards stationed at an adjacent building smelled burning wires at 1:25 a.m.

Watchmen then saw flames come out and quickly spread inside the building, destroying a million pesos worth of office supplies and equipment at the salary deduction office of the agency. *With a report from Margaux C. Ortiz*

METROBRIEFS

Sad reunion

A POLICE officer was shot dead in front of his children in Pasig City yesterday morning. PO3 Florencio Antolin of the Central Police District was shot dead while he tried to protect himself and his two children in front of four hold up men. The victims were aboard a jeep traversing Pasig Boulevard, Bagong Ilog, when four unidentified gunmen declared a holdup. Antolin was about to pull out his gun when he was shot by one of the suspects. Another one made sure he was dead by stabbing him several times on different parts of his body. The suspects took off with Antolin's firearm, a .9mm caliber pistol. The victim's children had just arrived from Brgy. Lucban, Cagayan de Oro to spend time with their father for the Christmas season. *Ruth L. Navarra*

New LRT 1 sked

LIGHT Rail Transit Authority trains bound for Monumento in Caloocan will be servicing commuters from 5 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., while those going to Baclaran in Parañaque will leave the Monumento station at 8 p.m. today and on Dec. 31, according to LRTA Administrator Melquiades Robles. Its Line 2 or Purple Line services, covering the Santolan-Recto-Santolan route will still be open to the public from 5 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Makati fireworks

MAKATI City government officials asked residents to attend a special party on Dec. 31 at the corner of Ayala and Paseo de Roxas Avenues. Makati Information and Community Relations Department chief Joselito Salgado said the "Makati New Year's Eve Countdown" will feature fireworks displays. Salgado also stressed that there is no need to worry about fireworks-related injuries with the opening of the Makati Acute Care Center for emergency cases near the Central Business District on Dec. 31. The MACC is located at the old site of the Ospital ng Makati on Malugay, Barangay Bel-Air. *Margaux C. Ortiz*

Passport found

A PASSPORT belonging to Lina Marinella Legaspi was found at the Rita Optical Shop, Makati Cinema Square on Dec. 22. The owner may claim the passport upon showing identification papers at the shop or call 844-1722.

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Pacquiao, HBO agree on terms of title rematch

THE ROAD to the much-anticipated rematch between Manny Pacquiao and Juan Manuel Marquez (left) has finally been smoothened by the contract signing with HBO. AFP

By Recah Trinidad

AFTER GETTING solid assurance on his purse, Manny Pacquiao yesterday signed his contract to fight WBA/IBF featherweight champion Juan Manuel Marquez of Mexico again next February.

Pacquiao, the Ring Magazine featherweight champion, quibbled over the terms of an addendum to his mother contract with international promoter Murad Muhammad pertaining to the rematch against Marquez, who escaped with a controversial split draw despite being decked three times by Pacquiao in their first fight in Las Vegas.

The rematch against Marquez was put in jeopardy this week after Pacquiao, as reported by broadcaster Ronnie Nathanielsz, declined to sign the new contract which stated that he would be paid $900,000 for a rematch against Marquez "or a bout against another credible opponent."

Pacquiao was displeased over what had happened when the promised $1.5 million fee to fight Erik Morales last year was reduced to $700,000 after he ended up fighting Marquez last May.

Two-fight contract

The RP ring hero had refused to sign the fight contract delivered by his business manager, Rod Nazario, to GenSan on Friday where Pacquiao celebrated his 26th birthday.

Pacquiao, however, felt assured yesterday following a change in terms on the two-fight contract.

The phrase "a bout against another credible opponent" has been changed to "a bout against an opponent acceptable to HBO."

This means that, if and when any of the two prospective Pacquiao opponents—Marquez and Morales—couldn't fight, HBO will decide on a credible opponent.

HBO directly pays the purses of the fighters in major cards it presents.

"Everything has been clarified, and all parties—Pacquiao, HBO, Murad—agreed to the terms," Nathanielsz, who helped revive the dwindling negotiations, told the INQUIRER.

The same contract stipulates that Pacquiao would be paid $1.750 million to fight Morales in July.

HBO Sports senior vice president Kery Davis said the clause "credible opponent" was to ensure that Pacquiao doesn't lose the date and the chance to fight someone else for the same purse.

Murad, who was in Manila recently, explained that only HBO would decide on whether or not the substitute opponent is acceptable.

What happened last year was, after Pacquiao had beaten Marco Antonio Barrera, the promised fight against Morales was suddenly scrapped.

Pacquiao was supposed to have received $1.5 million had he fought Morales.

He was instead forced to fight Marquez and was paid a purse reduced by more than half.

By Murad's reckoning, Marquez was not a credible opponent.

Marquez, a superb counter-puncher and master ringman, proved Murad wrong.

Pacquiao said he lost $800,000 only because of one man's wrong opinion.

At least it's now HBO, holder of the money bag, and not Murad which will decide whether or not Pacquiao's opponent is credible or not.

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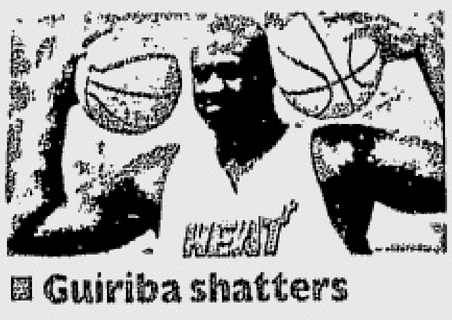
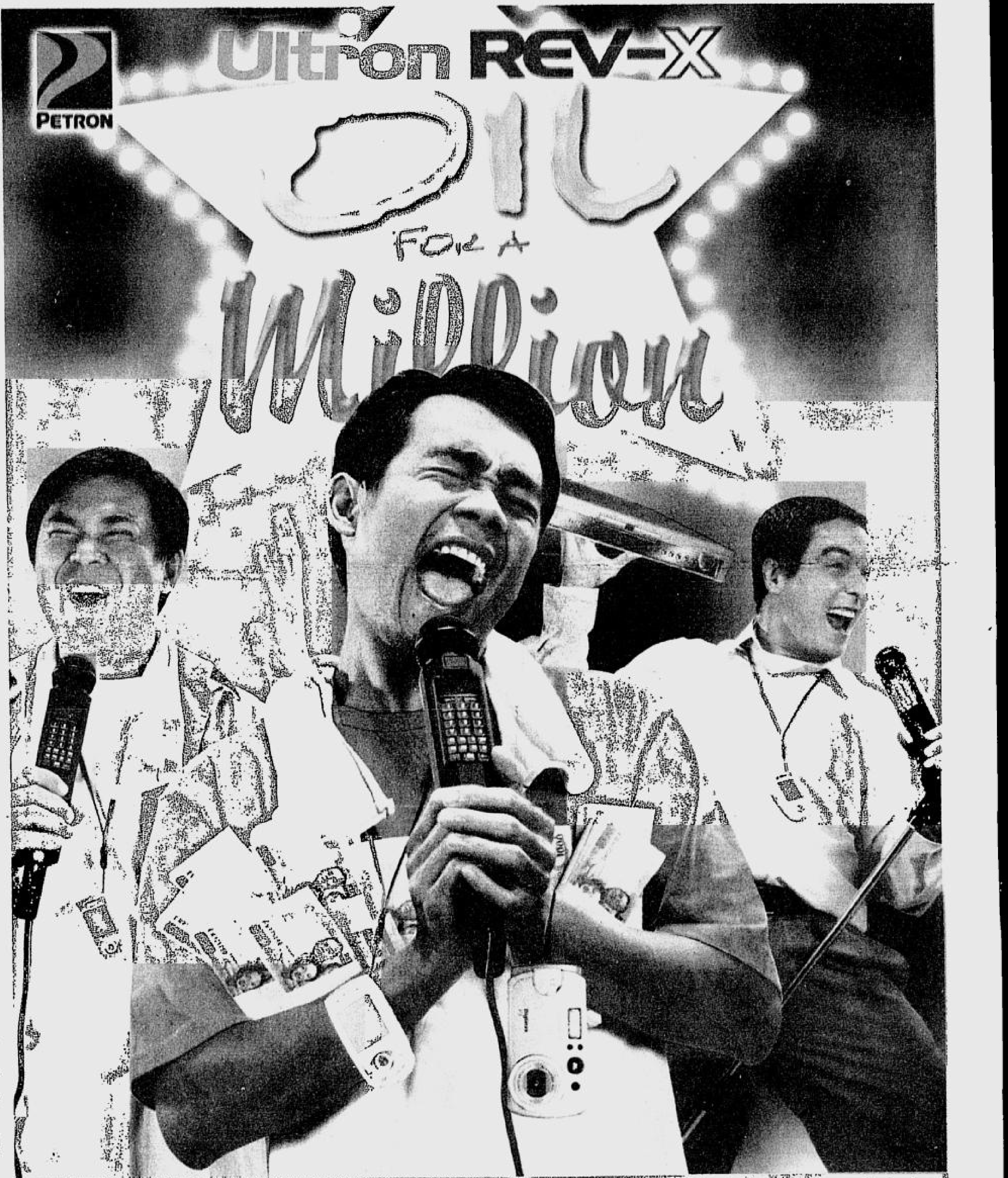
■ All set for Kobe-Shaq Christmas battle /A23



■ Guiriba shatters old Papa record /A24



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PSA confers Presidential Award on Patrimonio

IN his prime, Alvin Patrimonio was the recipient of numerous major awards from the Philippine Sportswriters Association (PSA).

Now even in retirement, the 6-foot-3 former Mapua Cardinal and many-time national player, considered one of the greatest of his generation, still found a way to be included in the honor roll of the country's oldest media organization when it fetes the top achievers in sports in the year 2004.

For being one of the Philippine Basketball Association's only two four-time Most Valuable Players who redefined power play at the low post, the 38-year-old Patrimonio has been chosen by the 90-member association as the recipient of its Presidential Award during its Annual Awards Night on Jan. 13 at the Manila Pavilion.

Patrimonio is just one of the more than 60 athletes and entities, led by Sportsman and Sportswoman of the Year Manny Pacquiao and Jennifer Rosales, to be honored in a simple, 90-minute program sponsored by Red Bull, Agfa Colors, Photokina, Pagcor, San Miguel Beer, the Philippine Sports Commission and aired over NBN-4.

The shy, soft-spoken power-forward was the PSA major awardee in pro basketball in 1991, '93 and '97 and honored as best in amateur basketball in 1987.

The man dubbed "The Captain" formally retired from playing after a colorful, 17-year career spiked by several league records, including four MVP honors, and inclusion in the PBA's 25 Greatest Players list.

A long, arduous battle against an injury in his left knee was the major reason the 12-time All-Star cited for his abrupt decision to finally hang his ever popular No. 16 jersey with Purefoods.

But there was no doubt Patrimonio won a lot of 'wars' in the course of his pro career.

He was adjudged MVP in 1991, 1993, 1994 and 1997 to follow in the footstep of the legendary Ramon Fernandez as one of only two players to win the league's highest individual award.

Aside from the MVP plums, Patrimonio also has six achievement awards (15,000, 10,000 and 5,000 points, 2,000 defensive and 1,000 offensive rebounds and 2,000 assists).

Only he and Fernandez have logged at least 30,000 minutes of playing and is one of only four players who have a career total of at least 6,000 rebounds.

Just before his retirement, Patrimonio is already the holder of the league's record for most consecutive games at 596, snapped only after he opted to sit Purefoods' 93-91 victory over Alaska in the current Grand Matador-PBA Philippine Cup.

Throughout his pro career, Alvin only had Purefoods for a team.

He led the Hotdogs to 11 finals appearances and six championships, the last of which came in the 2002 Governors Cup under present coach Ryan Gregorio.

"I've fought a good fight, finished the race and kept the faith. It's now time to move on," he said.

In 1991, Patrimonio inked a P25 million contract with the Hotdogs, a deal that paved the way for superstar-millionaires in the pro league.

A year earlier, he was selected as member of the first ever all-pro team to compete in the Asian Games.

Alvin played on two more PBA national squads to the Asiad in 1994 (Hiroshima) and 1998 (Bangkok).

Patrimonio is currently the Purefoods team manager.

Eala picks RP quintet head coach Dec. 29

By June Navarro

THE GUIDANCE of his predecessors will be the final piece in the national team coaching puzzle PBA commissioner Noli Eala is trying to solve.

Eala said he would first seek valuable insights from former commissioners Rudy Salud and Jun Bernardino before announcing his choice of the Philippine team coach to the members of the league's board of governors in a special meeting on Dec. 29.

"Seeking their (Bernardino and Salud) advice is the only thing left before the league makes its choice," said Eala after sifting through the proposed programs of the four coaching aspirants.

Eala had earlier asked Coca-Cola's Chot Reyes, Joel Banal of Talk 'N Text, Alaska's Tim Cone and Yeng Guiao of Red Bull to come up with a written program on how they intend to run the national team for the next four years, if chosen as head coach.

"A major part of my decision will be based on their thoughts. I believe it is more objective than the interview part," said Eala. "There's nothing final yet but you might be surprised when the PBA announces its decision."

The PBA has agreed to assume responsibility in forming, funding and preparing the national quintet for the Asian Basketball Confederation (ABC) championship and other international events, except the Asian Games, starting next year under a memorandum of agreement it recently signed with the Basketball Association of the Philippines.

EALA: Surprise in store

Eala had already talked to two of the four teams whose head coaches are involved in the race, but declined to divulge the details pending the special meeting of the PBA Board of Governors on Dec. 29.....

He said he would be spending the holidays preparing the formal report on his decision, which he will present and defend before the board during the same meeting.

"I don't expect to get a unanimous decision from the board but you might be surprised when D-day comes," said Eala.

All of the candidates have already experienced coaching the national team.

Cone, however, owns a longer resumé after steering a PBA all-star team to the bronze medal in the 1998 Asian Games.

Reyes and Guiao had served as assistant coaches to different national squads early in their careers.

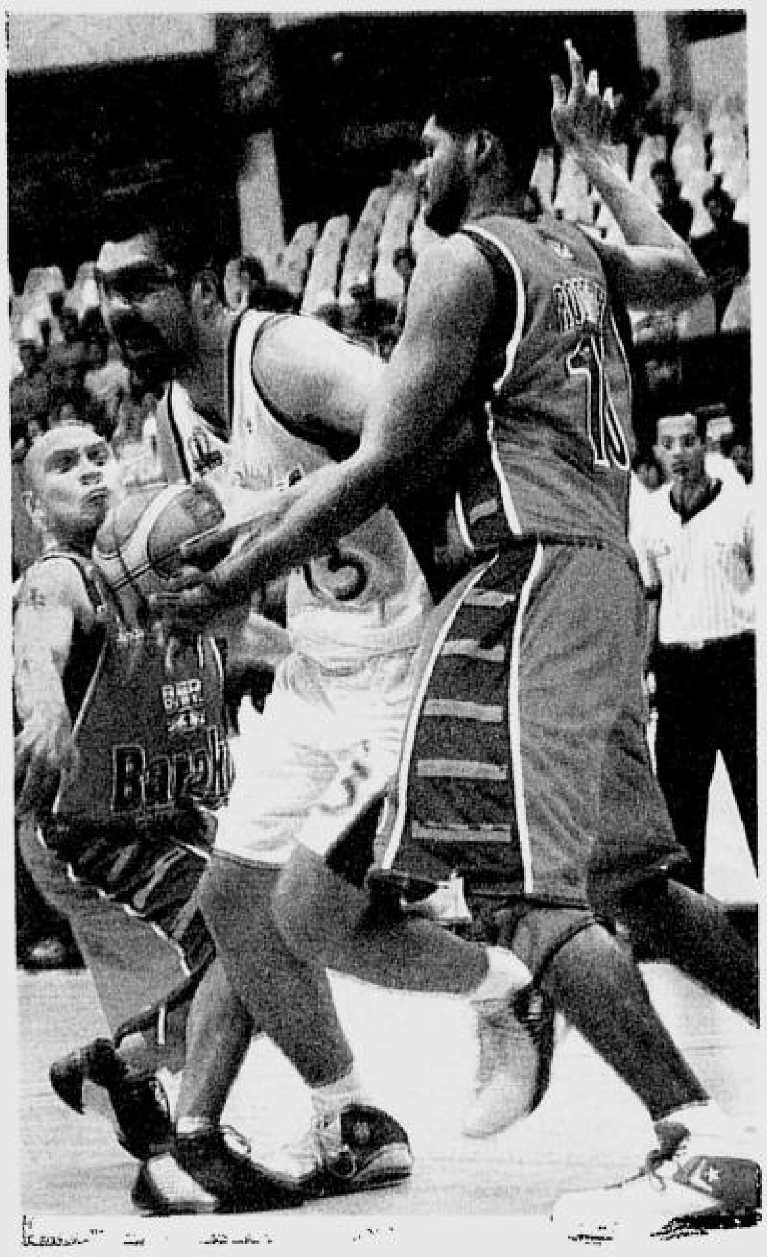
Banal is the only one without big international coaching experience. He did wear the national colors several times as a player.

Eala also got a piece of advice from San Miguel Beer coach Jong Uichico, who steered the RP team composed of PBA stars to a fourth-place finish in the 2002 Busan Asiad.

"He told me to consider experience above anything else. But he also said that since it's a four-year term, the relatively inexperienced coach could learn the ropes of international coaching after the first year," said Eala.

Next year's ABC is set in Doha, Qatar, with the top two teams qualifying for the world championship in Japan in 2006. The winner and runner-up in the 2007 ABC clinch slots to the Beijing Olympics in 2008.

The BAP will take care of the country's Asiad participation in 2006 with the help of its longtime supporter, Cebuana Lhuillier.


MARLOU Aquino of Sta. Lucia barrels his way past the defenses of Red Bull's Omanzie Rodriguez and Jimwell Torion in the Realtors' 105-84 clubbing of the Barako Wednesday night. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

SAMSUNG TOUR CHAMPS

Winners of the Samsung Amateur Tour final qualifying leg pose with Professional Sports Management Group's Boy Blue Ocampo, Cebu Country Club VP Bugs Unchuan, CCC general manager Sammy Darza and Luz Watin of Samsung. The winners are Nestor Mendoza (men's class C), Eric Deen (men's championship), Raymond Garcia (men's Class A), Mike Jo (men's Class B). In the front row are Frank Bejar (Class B), Sandra Smits (ladies Class B) and Gina Yap (ladies Class C).

POC forms committees

INCOMING Philippine Olympic Committee president Peping Cojuangco yesterday expressed optimism that he has formed a "hard-working" POC team that will help the Philsoc prepare for the 2005 Southeast Asian Games.

Cojuangco said officials picked for the different committees are tried and tested workers who have had lengthy planning sessions with him even before he ran for the POC presidency last November.

"These are not ceremonial committees we put up," said Cojuangco, who formally starts his four-year POC term on New Year's Day. "Our people there are committed to work for the sake of Philippine sports."

Leading the major committees are Rep. Monico Puentevella (weightlifting) for membership, Bert Lina (cycling) for arbitration, Harry Angping (softball) for technical, Reynaldo Jaylo (judo) and Benny Gopez (golf) as co-chairs of ethics and Go Teng Kok (athletics and chess) in ways and means.

Al Fernandez of athletics was named ways and means vice chair, Ed Ponce of karatedo as vice chair of arbitration, Sonny Lim of body building as vice chair of membership and volleyball's Roger Banzuela as vice chair of technical committee.

Also named to key positions were Cynthia Carrion for women in sports, Ding Tanjuatco for constitution and by-laws, Graham Lim for referees/judges, Red Dumuk for sports for all, Sim Chi Tat for sports and environment, Sultan Jamalul Kiram for cultural committee and Quini Boy de Tagle for corporate communications. *Marc Anthony Reyes*

Tan Ho bags 2nd crown

UNSEEDED Joshua Tan Ho pulled off a 6-1, 6-2 upset win over fourth seed Ryan Daza last Wednesday to pocket the boys' 18-under title in the 7th Armando Manzano Memorial Cup age-group tennis tournament at the Ynares Socio-Cultural Sports Center in Pasig City.

It was the second straight title for Tan Ho, who is now training under former Philippine Davis Cupper Manny Tecson. Last week, he beat Jandrick de Castro in the Olivarez Age-Group Tennis Championships.

Fourth seed James Murrell bagged the 16-under title over top seed Daniel Luis Macalino, 6-3, 6-0, while Jonathan Murrell won the 14-under title over fourth seed Kim Ivor Saraza, 6-2, 6-4.

In other results, unranked Christian Lee stunned third seed Jose Lorenzo Ferrer, 6-2, 5-7, 6-2, to clinch the 12-under title.

In the boys doubles category, William and James Murrell outplayed Jonathan Murrell and Joshua Tan Ho, 6-3, 6-4, for the 18-under title while Mark Balce and Peter Parian downed Patrick Arevalo and Akio Hari Ong Sy, 6-3, 6-3, to capture the 14-under title.

In the girls division, second seed Kristel Samala beat Melissa Orteza, 6-4, 7-5, to win the 18-under title while top seed Trudy Gine Amoranto defeated second seed Julie Em Botor, 7-5, 6-1, to claim the 16-under title.

Paragua sister plunges into local chess scene

THERE'S another Paragua in the chess scene.

Following in her brother's footsteps, 6-year-old Gem Hanna Callano Paragua will be competing for the first time in a chess tournament when she joins the Epifanio V. Guillermo Chess Tournament.

Gem is the sister of GM-candidate Mark Paragua, the most bemedaled Filipino athlete in the 2003 Southeast Asian Games in Vietnam.

"I see in her the same thing I saw in Mark when he was first starting out," said Ric Paragua, the father of the chessers.

"There's a good chance she can follow in her brother's footsteps."

Other early participants in the upcoming chess festival's 2050-below kiddies tournament are Robert Franz Grafil, Jeric and Jasmine Principe and Marc Christian Nazario.

The tournament is slated at 10 a.m. at the SM City Marilao in Bulacan, with Mark Paragua expected to grace the opening ceremonies.

The tournament, an anti-drug addiction and sports development project, is divided in three sections: under-10 open, under-14 open and 2050 and below. *Marlon Bernardino, Contributor*

Family togetherness

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

I AM glad to hear that Joseph Dumuk will join the work force of the Organizing Committee for the 2005 SEA Games that we are set to host in November. Joseph himself broke the news to me in a note he sent on Wednesday.

To those not in the know, Joseph, one of the brightest sons of San Fernando, La Union, did a splendid job the last time the country hosted the Games in 1991. At that time, Joseph almost single-handedly handled the medal tabulation, producing an almost flawless style of work that became the envy of many mathematicians in the land. With Joseph in command, not a single medal had been lost, misplaced.

Below is his letter to confirm his involvement in the Games.

"Dear Pareng Al,

"I suppose you are in tip-top shape now after being recharged in Mangatarem. I was in Manila yesterday to attend a planning session of the Organizing Committee of the 2005 SEA Games. Red told me to call you so I called you. Anyway, I might be spending more time in Manila starting next month.

"The year about to close was kind of good to me and my family although there were some setbacks, too. Some of the things I am happy about are the wonderful performances of MARK PARAGUA and CHARDINE CHERADEE CAMACHO (No. 5 in the World Youth Chess Championships in Athens Girls-10 years and under group). Another is the twin wins of my favorite golfer, TIGER WOODS, in his last tournaments.

"To celebrate, I am sending you by JRS two books by HARVEY PENICK with Bud Shrake—'Lessons and Teachings from a Lifetime in Golf' and 'The Game for a Lifetime: More Lessons and Teachings.' I hope you will enjoy them.

"Your *kababayan*, HARIDAS PASCUA, is the overall champion of the RIMAT TI AMIANAN Kiddies Chess Championships I organized lately.

"I close with our family's warmest greetings for the season and best wishes for the new year. May The Lord continue showering on you and your loved ones His bountiful blessings!"

"*Toy nanumo a gayyem mo,*

Joseph"

***

I learned from Joseph that the guy I had talked to at the Los Angeles/Tom Bradley International Airport some weeks back, Victor Ortega, is now the governor of La Union. Shame on me, I never knew.

Anyways, the governor and I, who haven't seen each other for quite some time, had a short, but sweet, conversation as the former congressman was on his way to Mexico to link up with GMA. I was homeward bound when we had the chance encounter at the airport hallway. In his usual warm manner, Governor Victor talked to me as though I had been a long-lost brother to him.

Please send my regards to the governor and his family, Joseph? To Mayor Mary Jane, too, of San Fernando?

I understand Governor Urros, the man Cong. Victor has replaced as the province's chief executive, is now the ambassador to Mexico.

Indeed, La Union teems with brilliant people. Wasn't the late Mariano "Lakay Anno" Flores of Pagdalagan, the hubby of my father's sister, Nana Dolor, dubbed "the Public Works secretary without a Palace appointment" during his stint as division engineer in the sixties in Region 1?

But then, Lakay Anno is another story.

***

My family and I condole with the loved ones of Ike Belo, the best friend of Grappa's owner Bert Bravo. Ike died yesterday after failing to recover from a stroke on Dec. 16. Ike was the president of the INQUIRER in 1991-92. His remains lie at the Sanctuario de San Antonio, Forbes Park, Makati.

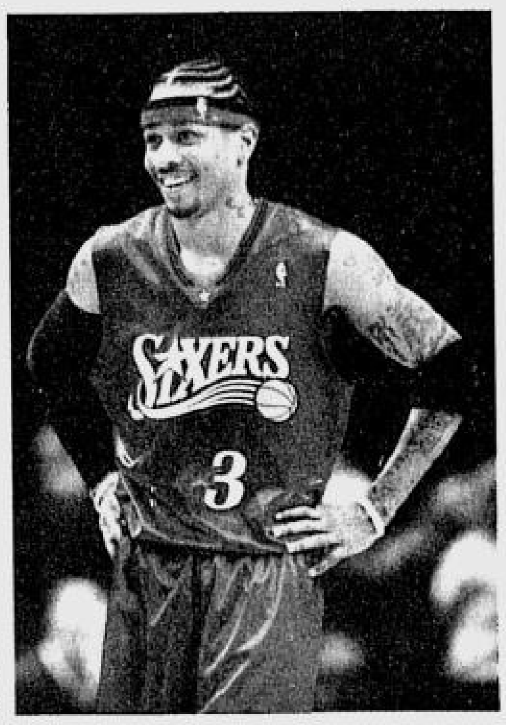
***

This being the day before Christmas, the birthday of our dearest Jesus Christ, let us pause and celebrate the occasion with family and other kin for that is the real essence of the season: Family togetherness.

The midnight table will be a feast to the tummy after we hear the Night Mass. In the end, though, what matters most is the food for the heart, for the soul. And that can only come from our unconditional acceptance of Jesus Christ, our only Boss-Tsip. And the way to accept him is to wholly accept the power of love, peace and forgiveness—without any condition.

Scorching Iverson props 76ers

Nets' Jefferson buries dagger at the buzzer


ALLEN Iverson smiles after another good-scoring performance for the Sixers. AP

INDIANAPOLIS—Allen Iverson scored 40 points, ending his streak of 50-point games at two, but Philadelphia rallied with a closing surge of 19-2 to beat Indiana, 102-90, Wednesday night.

Iverson was looking to become just the third player in NBA history to score 50 or more points in three straight games.

Reggie Miller led the Pacers with 30 points.

In East Rutherford, New Jersey, the Nets' Richard Jefferson capped the highest-scoring night of his career with an alley-oop lay-up off an inbounds pass with 0.8 seconds left to lift his team to a thrilling 92-90 triumph over Cleveland.

Jefferson scored 42 points—three above his former career high. The final two came when he rolled free of defender LeBron James and caught Jabari Smith's lob pass.

James had 23 points, nine rebounds and nine assists.

In Auburn Hills, Michigan, Ben Gordon scored 19 points and fellow reserve Tyson Chandler had 13 points and 11 rebounds as the Chicago won its fifth straight game, an 89-82 surprise over defending champion Detroit.

The Bulls hadn't won five in a row since Michael Jordan led them on a 14-game run during the 1997-98 championship season.

Chauncey Billups scored 32 points for Detroit, and Ben Wallace had 12 points, 15 rebounds and six blocks despite a sprained ankle.

In Orlando, Florida, Steve Francis scored 29 points to lead Orlando over San Antonio, 93-87, breaking the Magic's seven-game losing streak against the Spurs.

Tony Battie had 11 rebounds, and his defense on Tim Duncan kept the two-time MVP from being a factor down the stretch. Duncan led the Spurs with 24 points, but didn't score after a freethrow with 5:58 remaining.

In Boston, Mark Blount scored 22 points, Paul Pierce added 21 and Kendrick Perkins had a career-high 13 rebounds for the Celtics in a 114-109 victory over New York.

Nazr Mohammed had 22 points and 18 rebounds, and Jamal Crawford scored 25 for New York, which blew a 14-point first-quarter lead and lost to the Celtics for the 11th time in 14 games.

In Toronto, Donyell Marshall scored 12 of his 22 points in the fourth quarter, and Chris Bosh added 18 points as the Raptors clubbed the Utah Jazz, 98-86.

Toronto is 2-2 since trading Vince Carter to New Jersey last week.

Carlos Boozer had 29 points and 10 rebounds for Utah, which went 1-4 on its road trip.

In Atlanta, Antoine Walker scored 25 points, and the Hawks snapped a five-game losing streak by crushing the Dallas Mavericks, 113-100.

Al Harrington added 17 points for Atlanta, which got 16 from Josh Childress and 14 from Josh Smith.

Josh Howard, Jason Terry and Dirk Nowitzki added 23 points apiece for Dallas. In Houston, the expansion Bobcats won on the road for the first time, getting 21 points and 11 rebounds from rookie Emeka Okafor to beat the Rockets, 90-87.

Charlotte, a loser in its first 10 road games, got a season sweep over Houston after beating the Rockets in overtime Saturday.

Houston's Yao Ming had an ignominious triple double—20 points, 14 rebounds and 10 turnovers. Tracy McGrady had 25 points, nine rebounds, six assists and five steals for the Rockets.

In Milwaukee, Nick Van Exel had season highs with 26 points and six triples, and Zach Randolph added 22 points to lift Portland over reeling Milwaukee, 104-95.

Van Exel ranks fifth in the NBA career with 1,400 3-pointers.

Mike James scored a season-high 22 points, but the Bucks lost their fifth straight game.

In Seattle, Rashard Lewis scored 21 points for the SuperSonics, who sent Denver to its sixth loss in seven games with a 98-83 demolition job.

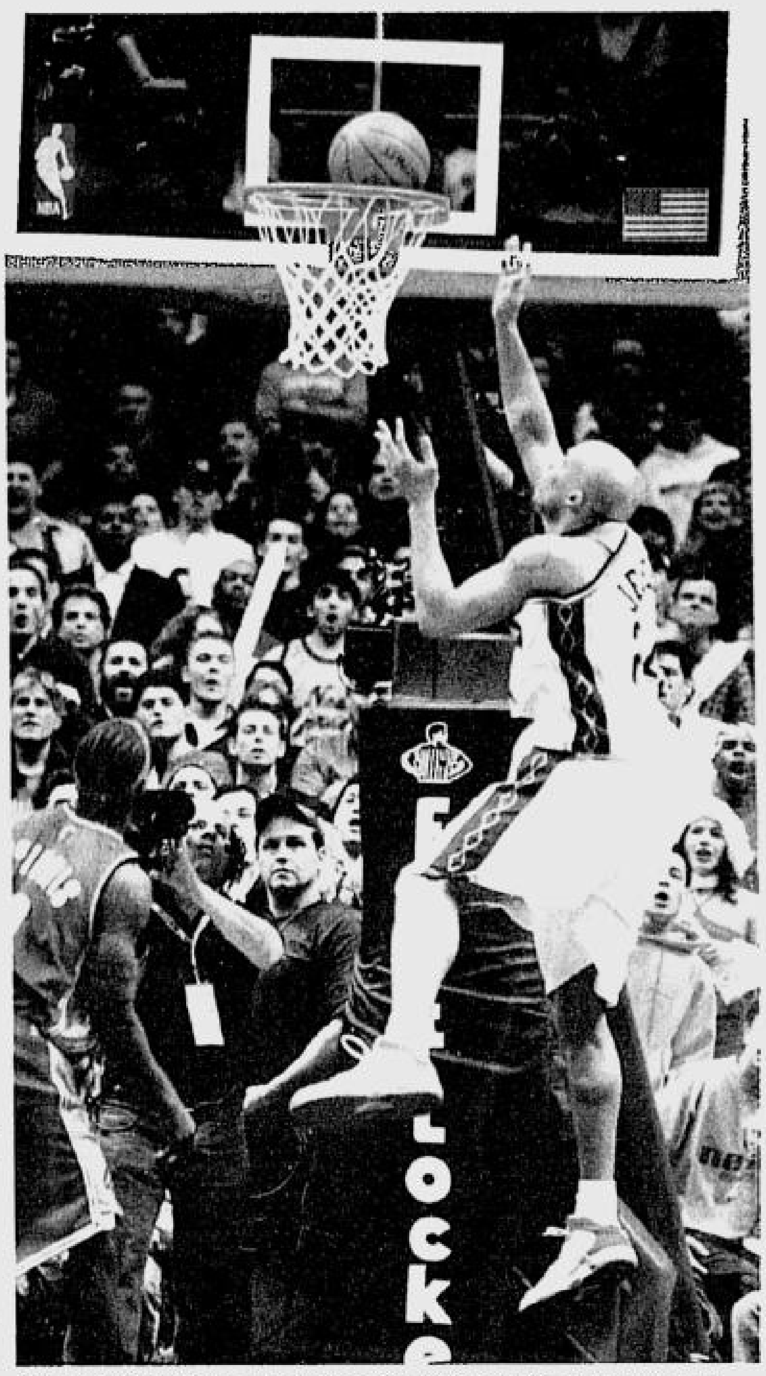
Battling an upper respiratory infection, Ray Allen added 20 points for Seattle, and Vladimir Radmanovic scored 19.

Andre Miller led the Nuggets with 20 points and Kenyon Martin added 18. Denver played without forward Carmelo Anthony, who missed his third straight game after spraining his left ankle.

In Los Angeles, Chucky Atkins scored a season-high 30 points, Kobe Bryant added 29 and Chris Mihm had 21 rebounds to match the highest total in the NBA this season as the Lakers clobbered New Orleans, 101-89.

David Wesley led New Orleans with 20 points, Lee Nailon had 18 and Baron Davis 17 in his return to the lineup. He missed 19 games because of an inflamed disc in his lower back.

In Oakland, California, Jason Richardson scored 24 points, Troy Murphy had 19 points and 13 rebounds, and Golden State snapped a four-game losing streak with a 109-99 upset of Memphis. *AP*


NEW JERSEY'S Richard Jefferson (right) lays up the game-winning shot at the buzzer against the Cleveland Cavaliers. AFP

All set for Kobe-Shaq Christmas battle

O'NEAL feels Bryant is a Corvette running into a brick wall.

CHICAGO—Shaquille O'Neal and Kobe Bryant were never going to stay together, despite winning three NBA championships. At some point, that mattered less than who got the credit.

Now they're free to bicker for the rest of their competitive lifetimes about who's to blame for their breakup.

On Saturday, the rest of us start keeping score when Shaq's Miami Heat and Kobe's Los Angeles Lakers meet for the first time since the Lakers cast off O'Neal.

From a promotional angle, at least, this is already a mismatch. Maybe only Don King is a better self-promoter than O'Neal. As a carnival barker, the big man is a genius.

Asked whether he expected Bryant to challenge him by driving the lane, Shaq's first response was, "No. Not at all. It's not something that I have time to think about, because I'm not that type of player."

But given a moment to think about it, he couldn't resist adding: "But of course, when you've got a Corvette that runs into a brick wall, you know what's going to happen."

O'Neal was smiling slyly when he said it, but that little cautionary tale works at several levels. First, it puts Bryant on notice that business is just that—business—and that anyone else who tried to drive the lane would get the same.

Not surprising, it also fixes the differences between the two in terms most favorable to Shaq. It says one of them is fast and flashy—that would be the same guy O'Neal nicknamed "Showboat" not long after they started playing together—and the other is solid.

For those fans who still haven't chosen sides since the breakup, it's an invitation to do just that. And why not? As he reminded America during a televised interview this week, O'Neal has the upper hand on the court at the moment, too.

"I got somebody, that other guy, who's just as lethal," Shaq said, talking about Miami teammate and budding superstar Dwyane Wade.

"He's a little bit younger, he's got a lot of tools and a lot to do, but he's just as lethal. It's my job to make him lethal-er; it's my job to make him the lethal-est—if that's a word."

It's not, but O'Neal had no problem getting his point across.

Winning is still about making everyone play better. While Shaq's numbers are down slightly this season, Wade's are up across the board—points, minutes, assists, even rebounds. And with Shaq taking Tuesday night off to rest up for the weekend, Wade produced a 33-point, 11-assist performance to lead the Heat past the Boston Celtics, extend their season-best winning streak to nine, and improve their Eastern Conference-leading record to 20-9.

The Lakers, meanwhile, are 13-11 and still smarting over consecutive losses to Washington, for the first time in a dozen years, and Memphis, which hadn't won in 18 tries in Los Angeles, dating to when the franchise began play in Vancouver in 1995. *AP*

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ELAN
A change of heart
INQUIRER Golf Monthly
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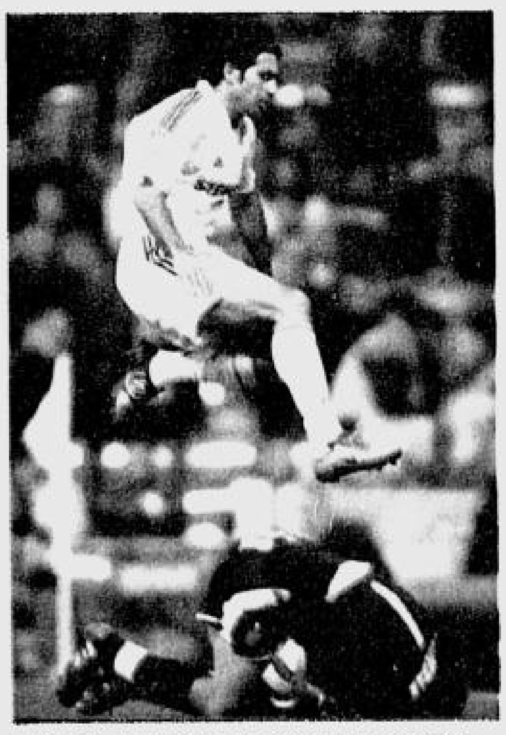
RECRUITMENT

Real Madrid ends year poorly


REAL Madrid's Luis Figo jumps over Sevilla goalkeeper Esteban during their match. AFP

MADRID—Real Madrid ended a miserable year on a low note when it lost 1-0 at home to high-flying Sevilla in the Primera Liga on Wednesday.

Brazilian striker Julio Baptista produced a cool finish after 19 minutes, clipping the ball over the head of keeper Iker Casillas to inflict a second home defeat of the season on Real.

It was Sevilla's first league victory at the Bernabeu in 20 years and had it not been for some superb last-ditch saves from Casillas and some wasteful finishing by Sevilla's forwards the margin would have been much greater.

Real, which ended last season a disappointing fourth, struggled to create any chances, although Ronaldo, who started the game on the bench, had a goal disallowed after coming on.

"We gave a really poor image out there," said Real coach Mariano Garcia Remon. "It was a shame to close the year with a performance like this."

The result left Real, which substituted David Beckham at halftime and withdrew his England teammate Michael Owen late on, in fifth place, a distant 13 points behind leader Barcelona, which claimed a late 2-1 win over Levante on Tuesday.

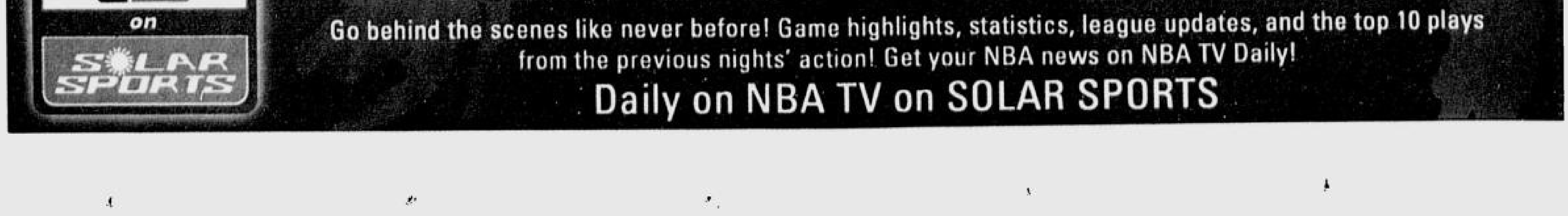
Barcelona leads the table on 42 points from 17 games, 10 ahead of reigning champion Valencia, which moved into second place after their 3-0 win over nine-man Espanyol. Sevilla has 31 points with Espanyol on 30.

Real, which has 29, has played a game less as it is still to complete the final six minutes of its match against Real Sociedad which was abandoned because of a bomb scare with the score at 1-1.

It was a great evening for Basque sides Athletic Bilbao and Real Sociedad.

Bilbao thrashed struggling Mallorca, 4-0, at San Mames and Sociedad crushed troubled Malaga, 5-1, away, strike partners Darko Kovacevic and Nihat Kahveci grabbing two goals apiece.

With its newly appointed director of football, Arrigo Sacchi, looking on from the stands, Real made a promising enough start against Sevilla. *Reuters*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SWIM TRYOUTS

Guiriba shatters old Papa record

BACOLOD CITY—Lambert Guiriba broke a 12-year-old national record Wednesday in the worthiest achievement during the Philippine Amateur Swimming Association national tryouts at the Panaad Olympic pool.

A Vietnam Southeast Asian Games campaigner, Guiriba smashed the old Philippine record of 24.60 seconds set by Ryan Papa in 1992 with a time of 24.33 in the 50-meter freestyle.

Along the way, Guiriba also surpassed the age-group qualifying time of 24.63 seconds.

Philippine Columbian Association Stingray's Kendrick Uy came in second in 25.26 and Jonas Ramos ended third in 26.79.

"My parents were really proud about my last day's performance. They keep telling me that I could be the best swimmer here," said Guiriba.

"But I'm not aware of the record. All I did was to swim my best," he added.

Olympian Liza Danila ruled the women's 50 free, clocking 27.80 seconds. Claudine Chiongbian finished second in 29.16 and Lianne Ramos was third in 29.45.

Danila missed the required qualifying time for the race, which was pegged at 27.22 seconds.

Still, Danila became the first local tanker to gain a ticket to next year's Southeast Asian Games in Manila after reaching the time required for the 100 backstroke earlier in the day.

Guiriba and Danila, who took home four gold medals each, shattered three and two age-group records, respectively. They will be recommended by Pasa for the coming Fina World Cup and World swimming championship in Montreal, Canada, next year.

Guiriba set new records in the 50 and 100 butterfly and 50 free while Danila met the required time and won the gold in the 100 and 50 fly in the four-day event supported by Pasa president Chito Ilagan.

Other tankers who met the standard age-group time were 11-year-old Banjo Borja, who topped the 100 backstroke and 200 individual medley, and Tia Lacson, who ruled the 800 free.

The two boosted their chances for a slot in the national age group team.

Bata, Django, Pagulayan in US tilt

REYES

THE COUNTRY'S top billiard players, Efren "Bata" Reyes and Francisco "Django" Bustamante, are scheduled to compete in the US Pro Tour Pool Championships set Jan. 4-9 next year at the Bicycle Casino in Bell Gardens, Los Angeles, California.

Also competing is Alex "The Lion" Pagulayan, the Filipino-Canadian who is the reigning world pool titleholder.

Reyes, the 1999 World Pool champion in Cardiff, is in Pampanga for a brief vacation before preparing for his coming US schedule.

Reyes, nicknamed "The Magician" for his incredible pool tricks, is expected to travel to Manila soon to play against top-notch competition.

Bustamante, who usually plays in the German circuit, is practicing in Tarlac.

Other cue artists also invited to play in the 64 man-tournament, which will be aired on ESPN Sports, include defending champion Mika "The Iceman" Immonen, Johnny "The Scorpion" Archer, Rodney "Rockets" Morris, Charlie "The Korean Dragon" Williams, Ralf "Kaiser" Souquet, Thorsten "The Hitman" Hohmann and two-time Asian Games medalist Young Hwa Jeong of Korea. *Marlon Bernardino, Contributor*

Milo X'mas tennis slated

AGE GROUPERS will be treated to another Christmas tournament when the 2004 Milo Junior Tennis Cup unwraps at the Philam Homes Tennis Club on Dec. 26-30.

Featured events are the boys' and girls' 18-under, 16-under, 14-under, 12-under and the unisex 10-under divisions in the Milo netfest organized by the Children's Tennis Workshop with support from adidas.

Interested players may call Coach Joe Paquia at the CTW office at 4282069. Deadline is set on Friday at 12 noon on Dec. 24.

TEEN HOTSHOT: Marty Aguilar finished second recently in the Asian Karting Open championships in Sentul, Indonesia. The 13-year-old Bosch Intelco-backed racer was actually in the hunt for the overall crown in the Rotax Max junior class but an accident forced him to retire with just three laps to go. The Filipino will next compete in the Kartstars series in Australia soon.

EXHIBITION: NHL World Star's Sergei Fedorov (left) fights for the puck with Poland's Jacek Zamojski during their exhibition match in Katowice, Poland. NHL World Star is on an exhibition tour to Europe during the players' strike in NHL. The match ended 3-3.
REUTERS

Arroyo's side

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

LET ME start by wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

In spite of a bad year in 2004, I say we are still fortunate for being able to survive and continue to live on even though the country has plenty of problems to solve. Life goes on.

Meanwhile, in response to my piece last Monday where I wrote about the controversial importation of 17 race horses from Australia, I received a faxed reply which said that Presidential son Rep. Mikey Arroyo had no role whatsoever in the controversy surrounding the 17 race horses. His name hasn't appeared in the paper trail and that Lamberto Almeda Jr. and Dante Arevalo aren't his dummies.

"His conscience is clear. He isn't going to tarnish the good name of the Macapagal-Arroyo family," said a close friend. "Mikey did not own any of the race horses which arrived in Subic Bay in July 2003." He did not even buy any of the race horses even though it was reported that Almeda actually sold some of the horses to other horse owners.

Mikey understands that because he comes from a political, famous family, his name will always be dragged into this kind of controversy. But he isn't going to do something illegal. Rather, his close friend said, Mikey is happy serving his constituents, spearheading numerous medical missions and livelihood programs for the poor. While it is true that he was booed during the recent Manny Pacquiao fight at the Fort in Taguig, there were many others who cheered for him. Mikey and Manny are longtime friends.

***

PEPING BACKED AS SPORTS CZAR. The only way to save the ailing Philippine sports is to have only one person run the national sports program. Ageless Julian Malonso, former POC president and outspoken sports critique, once said, "All the never-ending controversies confronting Philippine sports today are the result of the two-headed bureaucratic hydra that is the PSC (Philippine Sports Commission) and the POC (Philippine Olympic Committee). There should have been only one head in sports from the start."

An Olympic purist, the 81-year-old Malonso added the country has two overlapping sports leaders: the PSC chair appointed by the President of the Republic and the POC president elected by the National Sports Associations. Unlike the PSC chair, the POC president does not receive any salary as it is prohibited by the International Olympic Committee. Only those performing administrative functions may receive reimbursement for their expenses like the secretary-treasurer.

"As it is," Malonso stressed, "the PSC is arrogating and stifling the initiatives of the POC. The officials of these two sports bodies are always fighting."

Because they want to end this endless rift between the PSC and POC, several NSA officials headed by athletics and chess president Go Teng Kok want incoming POC head Jose "Peping" Cojuangco to also be appointed PSC chair. But Cojuangco did not comment on this snowballing move.

"The Philippines enjoyed one of her finest moments in the 1980s when Michael Keon both served as Gintong Alay executive director and POC president," said Go. "During his term, the country was able to produce sporting legends like Lydia de Vega and Isidro del Prado, who were unbeatable in their respective events."

In the past, the POC and the PSC are always locked in conflict. Most recently, outgoing PSC chair Eric Buhain and outgoing POC head Celso Dayrit had clashed over several issues. The same was true with former POC heads Rene Cruz and Cristy Ramos, who had had differences with Aparicio Mequi and Dayrit, respectively.

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FPJ's last show

By Nini Valera

FERNANDO Poe Jr.'s last show was definitely a blockbuster, a runaway hit, according to his longtime friend Josie Tagle.

Tagle said in Filipino on Tuesday night: "People are asking why FPJ must die and why not somebody else. If he were president, everybody here and everybody who belong to the masses would be happy."

One of FPJ's most devoted followers, Tagle had spent sleepless nights to shower "Da King" with her unwavering support for the last time.

Like the thousands who depended on FPJ for help, Tagle would feel lost now that he is gone, she admitted.

"*Napakabait* [A very good man]," she said, not bothering to hold back her tears.

She maintained that until his last hours on earth, FPJ had thought of the common people like her.

"The vendors [around the Sto. Domingo Church] would have a good Christmas because of Ronnie," she observed. "This is his gift to them—their brisk business during the wake. They will have a good Christmas because of FPJ."

He gave them names

During the lighter moments of his speech, deposed president Joseph Estrada, who caressed his longtime friend's face as soon as he arrived in church, recalled how FPJ had been fond of giving monickers to his friends.

It was FPJ who gave him the nickname "Erap" and who first called Dolphy "Pidol" and christened Susan the endearing "Swanie."

Estrada also recalled that his movies with FPJ had all been blockbusters, except for one: "Dos Palikeros."

"He knew he was the closest friend I had, but not once did he ask me for anything while I was president," Estrada said in Filipino.

He said FPJ had celebrated with the former president the latter's last three birthdays in his detention cell.

Fiery speeches from Estrada and director Joel Lamangan to wisecracks from comedian Dolphy will keep FPJ alive in the minds of the people as a man who they said was cheated out of a good fight.

"*Tingnan ninyo siya, napakaguwapo, nababakla ako*," said Dolphy.

Always around

The comedian also recalled FPJ's boundless generosity, turning it into a joke by addressing Susan in Filipino, "There are still so many people that FPJ had not yet given gifts to."

In another breath, Dolphy observed that his friend looked like a saint. "Just shine the spotlight on him and he's as good as a saint," he said in Filipino.

He recalled not only their professional relationship but also their friendship, which the comedian said stayed true even during Dolphy's bleakest hour.

"When we were crucified by the media, he was always around to offer his friendship," Dolphy said, apparently referring to the time when he and longtime live-in partner ZsaZsa Padilla were condemned by the press because of their relationship.

"I know I will meet you again, but please, don't make it too soon," Dolphy said.

He declared FPJ a winner a few times in his speech, in reference to the actor's presidential bid.

"*Hindi ka talo* [You did not lose], Ron," Dolphy said.

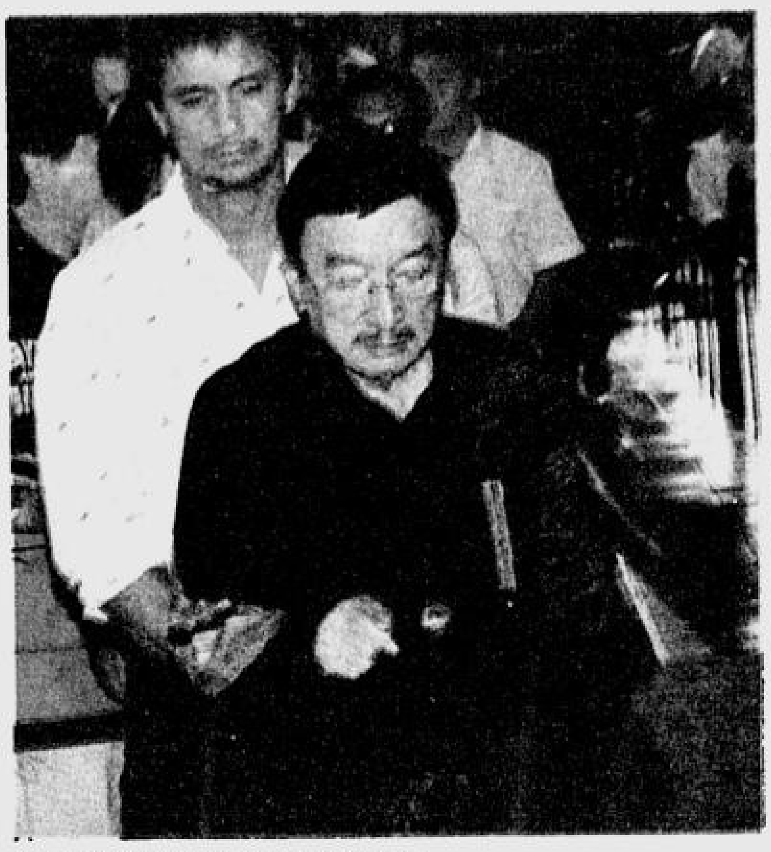
He said millions are crying now that FPJ is dead. He said that if the mourners would form a queue, the line from the Sto. Domingo Church in Quezon City would reach as far as Babuyan Islands at the northern tip of the country.

Widow's vow

Calls to continue FPJ's fight rang loud during the necrological service the movie industry people held for him Tuesday even as his widow Susan Roces appealed to authorities to allow his fans from the provinces passage to

FPJ/ A26

EDDIE GARCIA and Boots Anson-Roa


DOLPHY, followed by Richard Gomez
PHOTOS BY VAL HANDUMON

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER TV GUIDE

Friday, December 24, 2004

4:00 pm FRIDAYS 10:00 pm
PBA
ABC
Secrets with Juliana Palermo
ClickTheCity.com

Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABS-CBN 2				Showbiz No. 1	Sandara's Romance	Get Backers	Ragnarok	Masked Rider Ryuki	TV Patrol	Spirits	Krystala	Lovers In Paris	Hiram	Star Circle National Teen Quest	Star Circle Nat'l Teen Quest Elim Special			Insider	Private I
NBN	Value Vision	Value Vision		Value Vision	Teledyaryo	Value Vision		Gold & Glory In Grace	The Working President	Network Forum		Teledyaryo		Musconi Cup 2003				Ugnayang Pambansa	
ABC 5	Problema Nyo, Sagot Ko	PBA Game-Bol	PBA				Sentro	PBA					Big News	Secrets	TNA Impact		Bizboard On-Air		
GMA 7	Leya (2:45PM)	Joyride (3:15PM)	Snow Angel (3:45PM)		One Piece	Witch Hunter Robin	Slam Dunk	24 Oras		Extra Challenge		Mulawin	Starstruck (8:45PM)	Forever In My Heart (9:15 PM)		Bubble Gang			Saksi
RPN 9	Metro TV Shopping			Hey Arnold!	As Told By Ginger	Wild Thornberries	Sponge Bob	Entertainment Tonight	Just For Laughs	Enterprise		Monk		Dead Zone		Newswatch Now	Isang Linggong Pamasko		
IBC 13		V League				IBC Express Balita		Home Shopping Network		Celebrity Dat Com		Global Family Series		D.E.N.R.		Pulis Na Palaban	IBC News Tonite	GMA The Working President	
Solar		WWE Velocity		Thunder Box		Rastal	Ozzy & Drix	Mucha Lucha!	Avengers	Deep Space Nine		WWE Smackdown				WWE Velocity		Wow	
Nickelodeon	Dora, The Explorer	Little Bear	Blues Clues	Fairly Odd Christmas		Are You Afraid of the Dark?	100 Deeds of Eddie McDowd	The Amanda Show	The Brother's Garcia	Fairly Odd Parents	SpongeBob SquarePants	Fairly Odd Xmas		All That	100 Deeds of Eddie McDowd	The Amanda Show	Rocket Power	The Wild Thornberrys	The Brother's Garcia
MYX		Urban MYX	Rock MYX	Pop MYX	OPM MYX	Take 5	My MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		Mellow MYX	Rock MYX	Pop MYX	Urban MYX	Star MYX	Club MYX	My MYX	MYX Backtrax	OPM MYX	Mellow MYX
ETC		What I Like About You	JKX	The Today Show		Starting Over		NBC Nightly News	Entertainment Tonight	Will & Grace	What I Like About You	Iron Chef		Star Search		Tonight Show With Jay Leno		Blind Date	Fifth Wheel
Cinema One		Jologs		Ama, Bakit Mo Ako Pinabayaan				Cuore Ep.5			Review Night	Christmas Concert Special				Mr. Suave			
Studio 23		Urban MYX	Rock MYX		Pop MYX	Jimmy Neutron	Xiaolin Showdown	Teen Titans	Justice League	Wazzup Wazzup	Spider-Man: The Animated Series	Mas Match		Playing It Straight		News Central	The Oprah Winfrey Show		Spin City
AXN		Last Action Hero				30 Seconds To Fame	30 Seconds To Fame	Gensomaden Saiyuki	Gensomaden Saiyuki	7 Days		The Right Stuff II	Rated X	Cold Squad		Last Action Hero			
Star World		The Bold & The Beautiful		Hollywood Squares	Home Improvement	Ally McBeal		The Simpsons	The Drew Carey Show	Star News Asia	Friends	TNA Wrestling/ The Three Tenors In The Forbidden City		Stupid Behavior Caught On Tape	When Hidden Cameras Attack	Ultimate Force		Friends	Stupid Behavior Caught On Tape
CNN				Business International		Larry King Live		World News	World Sport	Business International		World News Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	World Sport
National Geographic	On Assignment	NG See		Nat'l Geographic Amazing Moments		When Natural Disasters Strike Back		The Snake Wranglers	Croc Chronicles With Dr Brady Barr	Wild		About Asia		National Geographic Specials		NG See		Weather Gone Mad	Seismic Seconds
Solar Sports		Danish Open '04 Final WD			Miguel Cotto vs. Kelson Pinto					NBA Action	NBA TV Daily	In This Corner		NBA Miami vs. Sacramento					GWS ep.52
Lifestyle Network	Country Style	Interiors By Design	Decorating With Style	Decorating Cents	Molto Mario	Sweet Dreams	30 Minute Meals	Bill Boggs Corner	Unwrapped	Ming's Quest	Revealed With Jules Asner		New York Nick	Guess Who's Coming To Decorate		The Hours			
HBO		Ghost Cat (3:15PM)			The Mirror Has Two Faces (4:45PM)					Star Trek Generations				The Lord Of The Rings The Two Towers					
Star Movies			Last Samurai			Les Miserables					Babe: Pig In The City (7:20 PM)			Home Alone			Home Alone 2: Lost In New York		
Cartoon Network	Scooby-Doo Show	The All New Popeye Show		Richie Rich	Baby Looney Tunes	Sylvester & Tweety Mysteries	Police Academy	Premiere	Toon Pick	Yu-Gi-Oh!	Zoids: Fuzors	The Looney Tunes Show		Mucha Lucha!	Codename: Kids Next Door	Justice League		Aqua Teen (11:15PM)	Yu-Gi-Oh!
ESPN			2004-05 Big East Conf. Basketball- Richmond vs Pitsburg				2004 Women's Track Shell Magic CT USA		Winter X Games VIII Slammed CO USA	College Football Bowl Game '04							Sportscenter Taiwan	Eng. Premier League Preview	Sportscenter Taiwan
Disney Channel	Kim Possible	Totally Spies	Lizzie McGuire	Even Stevens	That's So Raven	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	The Legend Of Tarzan	Lilo & Stitch/Unlakalive Bunny	America's Funniest Home Video	Wonderful World Of Disney			My Wife And Kids	That's So Raven	According To Jim	America's Funniest Home Video	Wonderful World Of Disney	
Cinemax				Dracula Dead And Loving It			Sleepstalker			Rollerball (7:15 PM)				On Hostile Ground			The Life Of David Gale (10:35PM)		
Hallmark Channel	Mad About You	Boyfriend For Christmas				Play With Me Sesame	Sesame Street		Bewitched	Mysterious Ways		Sue Thomas: FB Eye		Silent Night			The Detrad (10:35PM)		Mysterious Ways
Discovery Channel		Power Zone				Wild Discovery		Ultimate Discovery		Full Metal Challenge		Mythbusters		Wild Discovery		Ultimate Discovery		Crime Night	
MTV Philippines		Whatever Things	Essential: U2	Non-Stop Hits		Non-Stop Hits	05 MAA Nominee Specials	MTV Get Spotted	MTV Loveline	MTV Jammed	Happy Tree Friends Xmas Special	MTV Brand New	Be Seen @ MTV	MTV Asia Hitlist		Newlyweds	The Assistant	VH1 Hits/ Video Collection	
Sports Plus	Superbowl4 Kansas vs Minnesota		Rookie Manual	Porsche and 9810	Inside the PGA	This Is The PGA Tour		Golf Globe 2002	Pac10 College Arizona at USC					Inside the PGA	NFL Gameday	Davis Cup Finals Spain vs USA			
EWTN	Does The Church Still Teach That	Angelus (3:15PM)	Stations Of The Cross	Image Of God	Faith Factory	The Holy Rosary With Mother Angelica and the Nuns Of Our Lady Of Angels Monastery	Search And Rescue	Your Call	EWTN Gallery	Life on The Rock Encore		Gospel Of Life In Health Care	Defending Life	Daily Mass		Angelus (10:15PM)	Backstage	Father Corapi And The Catechism Of The Catholic Church	

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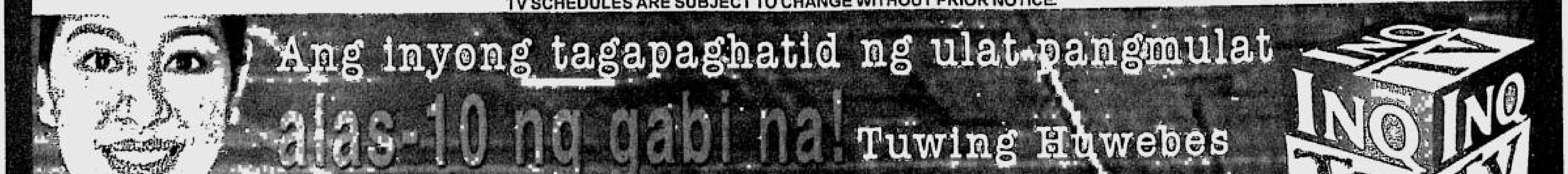
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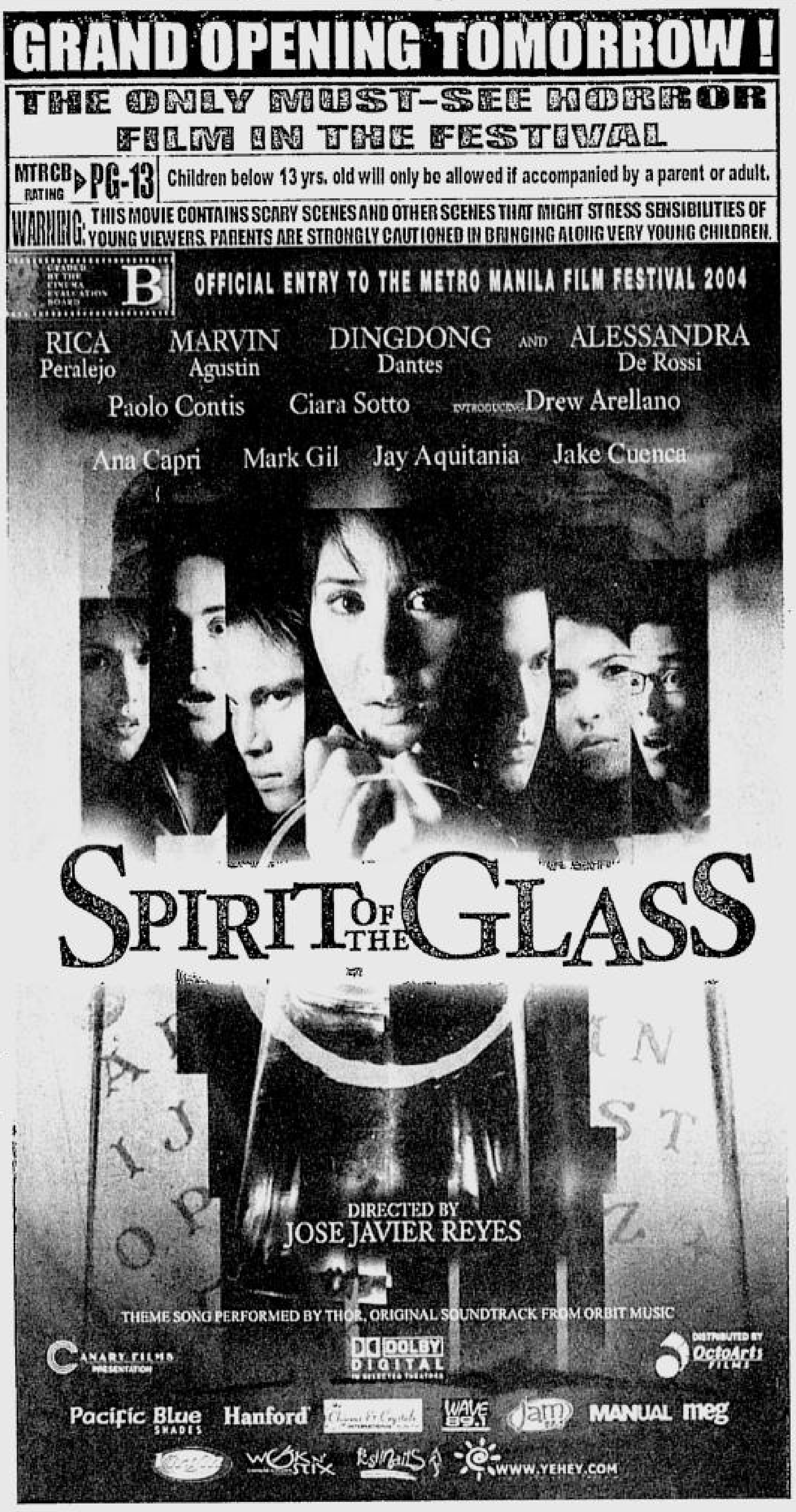
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A mother dies, and her children come home to bury her. And like all dutiful children, observe the traditional nine-day novena for the dead or Pa-Siyam. The siblings reunite after years of estrangement. Like most families, this one has secrets. Unanswered questions. The children hope to ride over the tensions, leave the questions unanswered, bury the secrets as they buried their mother. To move on. For this family, it is not to be. Something horrible happened in this house.
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SUBJECT TO MTRCB RATING
Luther and Nora Krank have made a decision. They're going to forgo Christmas. Luther is sick of the commercialism and the costs. So they're taking a cruise, but when their daughter calls saying that she's coming home they must get christmas together in 2 hours...
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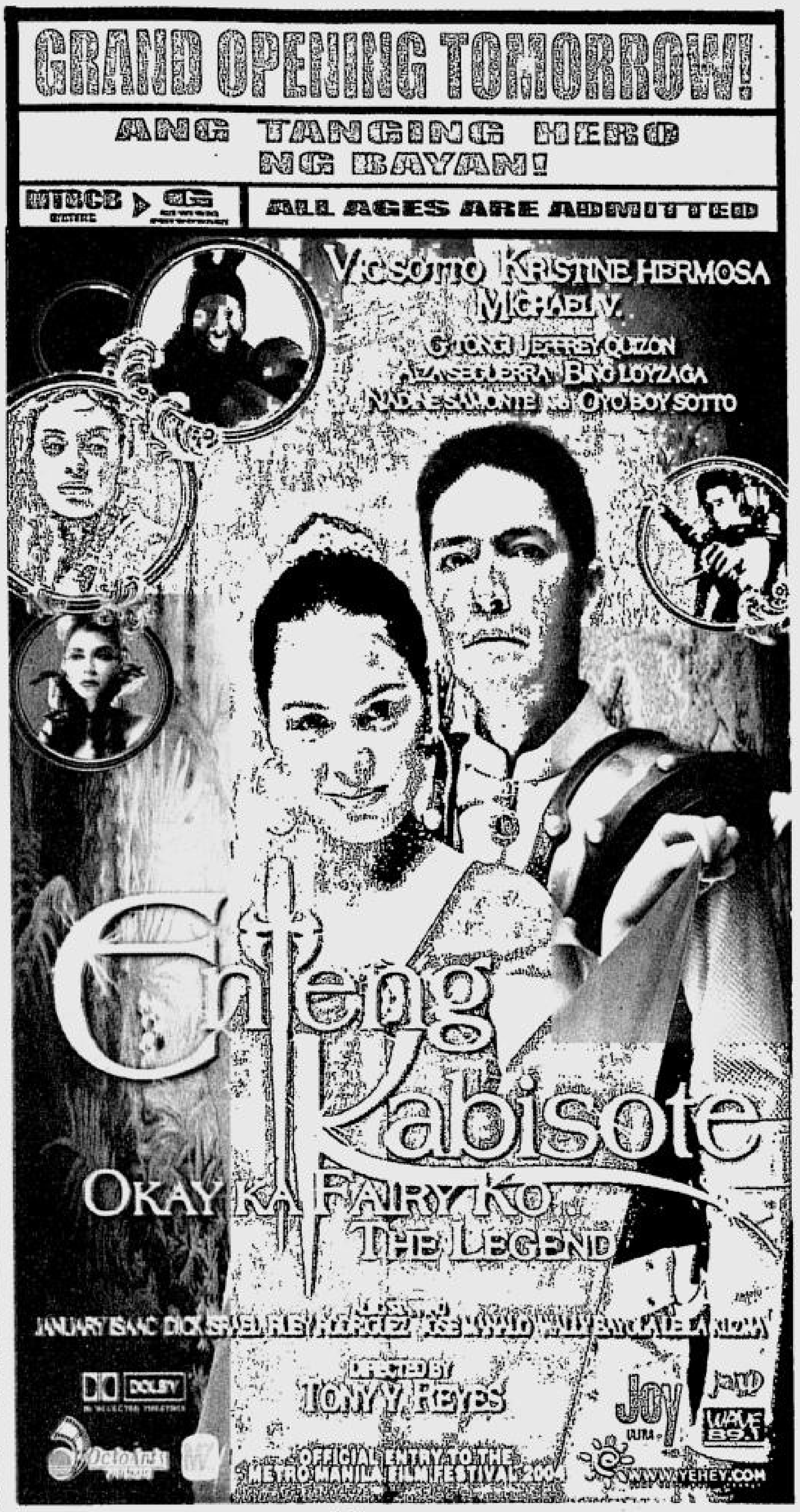
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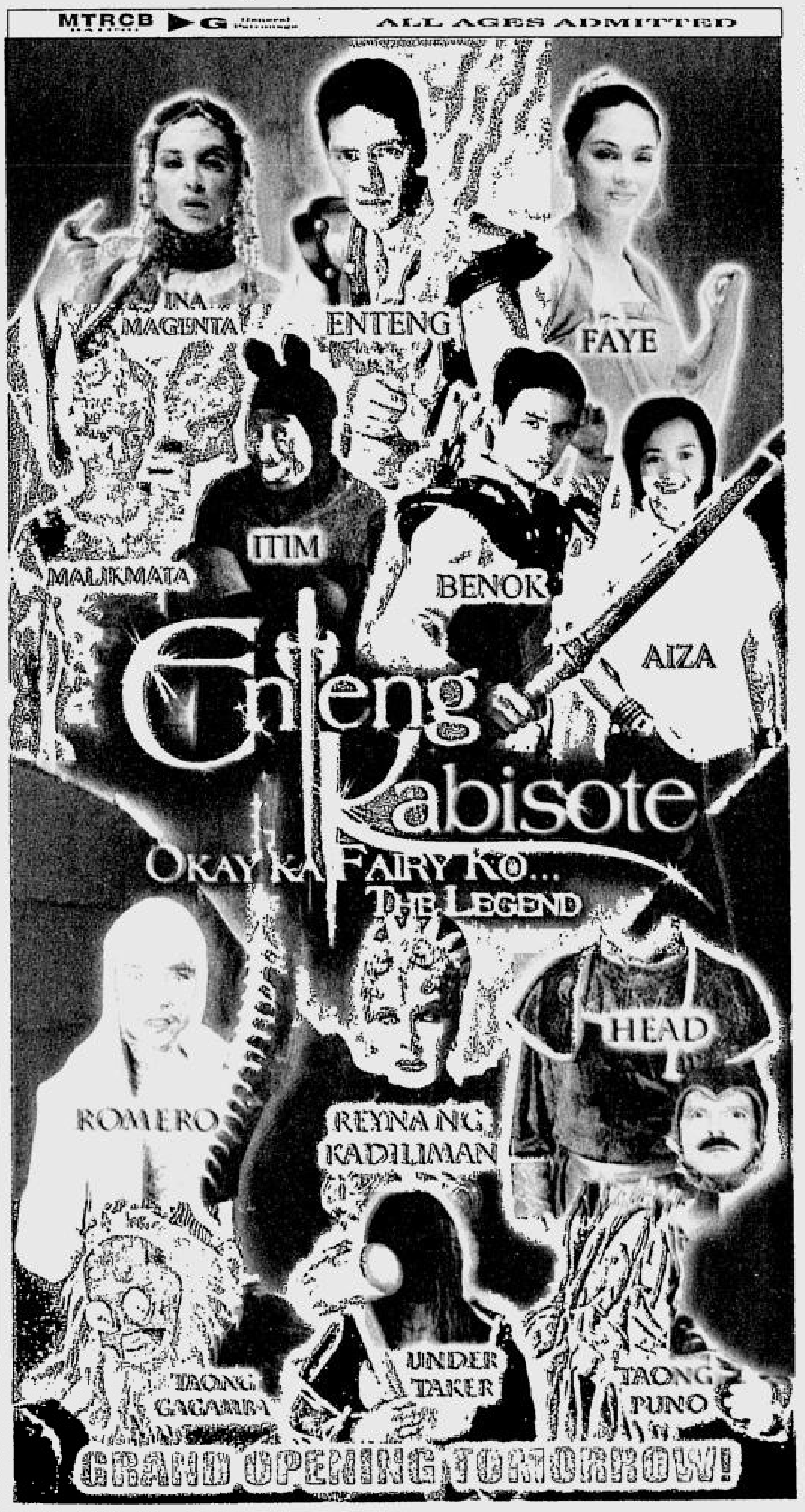
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FPJ's last show

From page A25

the wake.

Susan said during her speech that she received reports that some of FPJ's fans were being stopped on the North Diversion Road on their way to Manila to attend the Wednesday morning funeral.

"*Huwag naman po sana* [I hope this wouldn't happen])," she said.

She also vowed to continue her husband's legacy of helping the less fortunate not only among the people in the movie industry but also among the public. She said she wanted to give the masses their right to hope and freedom to dream.

Susan, who had asked earlier to keep out politics from the ceremonies, however, said FPJ had found new friends in this arena.

"They are all here," she said, apparently referring to former Sen. Loren Legarda, FPJ's running mate in the May presidential election, and current and former senators Jamby Madrigal, Kit Tatad and Juan Ponce-Enrile, among others.

Poignant send-off

The necrological service, which started promptly at 9 p.m. Tuesday and lasted at least three hours, was a poignant send-off to the most loved actor in local movies.

Despite Susan's plea to keep politics out of the ceremonies, there was no stopping Lamangan and especially Estrada from poking shots at the Arroyo administration and making veiled threats that a force summoned by FPJ and what he stood for would set a people free.

Lamangan's speech was the first to wake up the crowd into loud applause as he called for justice for FPJ.

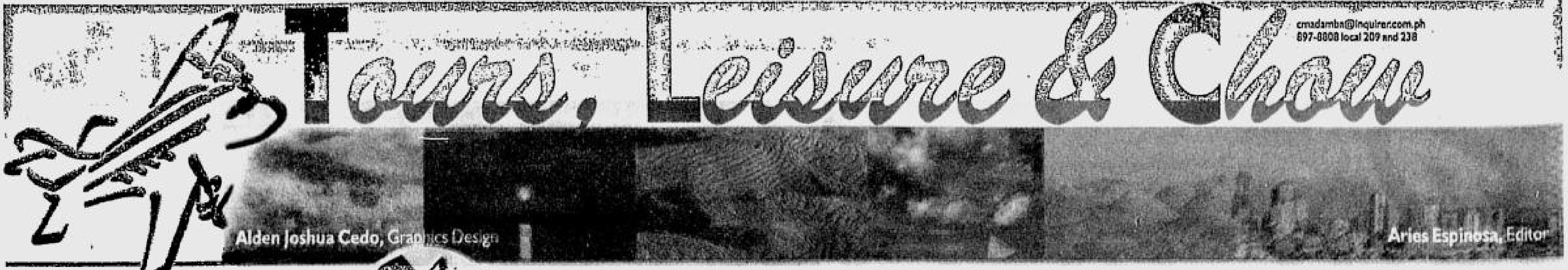
Eddie Garcia, Pablo S. Gomez, Richard Gomez, and Boots Anson-Roa also gave speeches that alternated with song numbers by Janno Gibbs, Dulce, Pilita Corales, Cris Villonco, Rico J. Puno—who even sang a duet with Estrada—and Nonoy Zuniga.

Fast friends in Mexico

MEXICO CITY—Actresses Penelope Cruz of Spain and Salma Hayek of Mexico hit it off from day one during the filming of "Bandidas," the two said last week.

Cruz had completed about 14 weeks of working with Hayek, in the northern Mexican state of Durango. "Now she's one of the best companions I've ever encountered or ever will," said Cruz.

Written and produced by Luc Besson, "Bandidas" tells of two women who overcome their differences to work together robbing banks. *AP*



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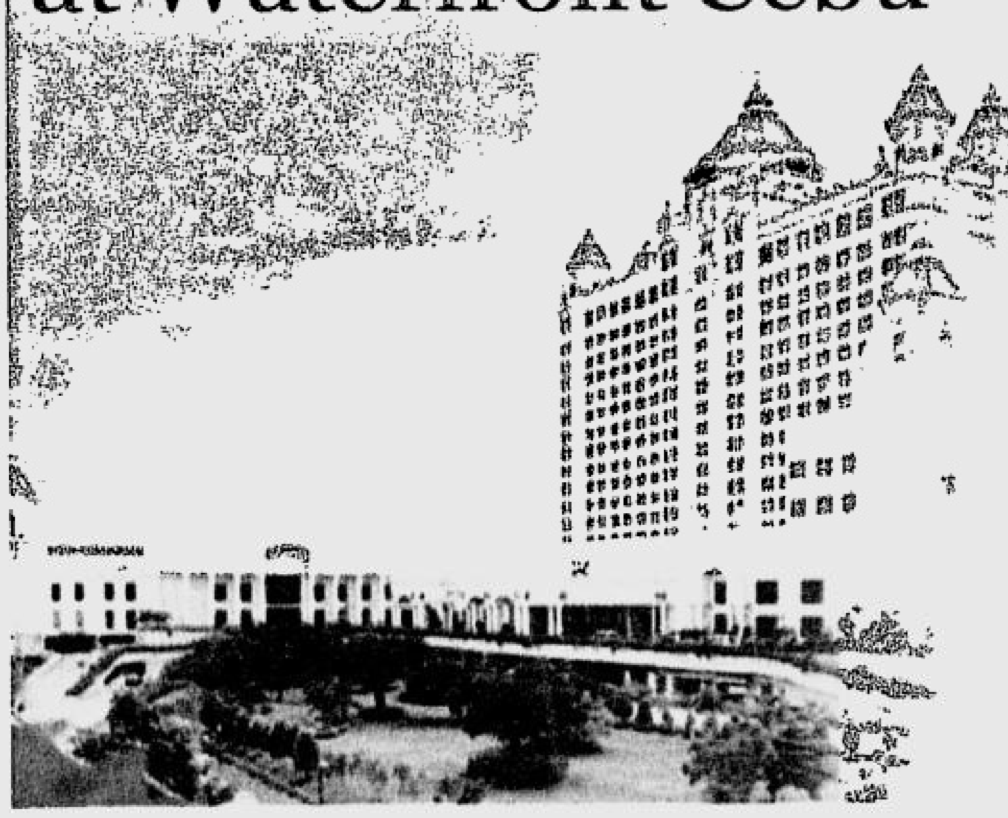

GET into the spirit of Christmas at Waterfront Cebu City Hotel and Casino. For P8,500 stay for two nights in a Superior Room and get the third night for free. It's a perfect way to spend a perfectly sparkling Christmas with all the exciting Yuletide events the hotel has in store for you. The Great Holiday Getaway includes complimentary buffet breakfast for two at Café Uno, complimentary set dinner at La Gondola, complimentary use of the swimming pool, 10 percent discount on all Hotel-owned restaurants and 10 percent discount on laundry services. The Great Holiday Getaway promo is valid for local residents or foreigners with valid ACR.

Plus, enjoy a limited, promotional rate for calling your loved ones abroad for only 20 cents per minute. Christmas at Waterfront Cebu City Hotel and Casino is truly at its sparkling best with the best rates for you and the family to make the most of the holidays.

So make that reservation now and set off to a Great Holiday Getaway at Waterfront Cebu City Hotel and Casino! Promo runs until January 3, 2005. For inquiries or reservations, call Waterfront Hotels and Casinos at tel. no. (032) 232-6888 or Manila Sales and Reservations Office at (02)687-0888. You can also log on to the website at www.waterfronthotels.net.

Holiday treats at Fiesta San Miguel

WHAT can be better than celebrating Christmas and New Year at Dusit Hotel Nikko's Fiesta San Miguel. Partake of the sumptuous Christmas and New Year set menu offered on December 24, 25, 31 and January 1, 2005.

And welcome the year 2005 with a non-stop party on Dec. 31 at Fiesta San Miguel featuring the "Tribe of Levi" band. Bring your family and friends and join them as they do the New Year countdown with a twist. New Year's Eve diners in all outlets get free noise makers and hats plus access to the countdown. Guests can still avail of the beer-all-you-can of fresh brewed San Miguel beer from 5:30 to 9 p.m. for only P300++.

Fiesta San Miguel is the first and only restaurant and bar in a hotel setting offering freshly brewed San Miguel beer along with an array of favorite Filipino dishes. It is located at the ground floor of Dusit Hotel Nikko. For queries and reservations, please call 867-3333 local 3308

Happy Holidays at The Bellevue Hotel

DELIGHT in the sweetest holiday treats at the Bellevue Hotel. From December 1 to January 6, satisfy your chocolate cravings at the Bellevue Gingerbread House.

Christmas goodies and cakes, including animal-shaped chocolates, scrumptious pralines, yummy fruit and log cakes, delicious food for the gods, crunchy Christmas cookies, Stollen bread and holiday hampers are the perfect gifts for the festive season.

Ranging from P80 to P1,500, these colorful and mouth-watering offerings are specially done by the hotel's expert pastry chefs.

Christmas Family Feast buffets at the Bellevue also offers lunch, dinner, Christmas Eve,

Christmas Day, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day buffets for P590+ and up.

Children 6 years old and below are free while 7 to 12 year-olds get 50 percent off. In keeping with the holiday spirit, avail of the Christmas Treats Room Package from December 10 to January 15 for only P3,500++. The package includes daily buffet for two at the Café D' Asie, 20 percent discount of food and beverage outlets, 20 percent discount on spa and salon services, free shuttle service to nearby malls, free use of pool and gym facilities, welcome drink and fruit plate.

Looking for a great way to start the New Year? Take your friends and family along to southern Metro Manila's largest and most modern concert venue, The Bellevue Grand

Ballroom as it opens to the public for the first time on Dec. 31. Mitch Valdes lends a one-of-a-kind performance only for this night. Entrance fee of P750 net includes one standard drink. Greet 2005 with a bang with your loved ones close by only at The Bellevue Hotel, Alabang's fun family destination. Call 771-8181 for inquiries.

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FRIDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2004

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

A2-1

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FPJ leaves Susan a 'woman of courage, dignity'

SUSAN in a different light

By Marinel R. Cruz

THE DEATH of a well-loved actor like Fernando Poe Jr. could always be "subject to media overkill," according to filmmaker Jose Javier Reyes.

"But one of the things that have come out

FPJ/ A2

'She had always opted to be two steps behind her husband. Now, her behavior is incomparable'

VIEWFINDER

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Viewfinder, A3-2

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Judy Ann Santos	JUDAY	320	Katya Santos	KATYA	291	Viva Hotmen	HOTMEN	291
Jericho Rosales	ECHO	326	Andrea Del Rosario	ANDREA	291	Masculados	MASCULADOS	320
Kristine Hermosa	KRISTINE	320	Ella V	ELLA	291	Gary Estrada	GARY	320
Robin Padilla	ROBIN	326	Jen Rosendahl	JENR	291	Ana Capri	ANA	320
Marvin Agustin	MARVIN	326	Sheree	SHEREE	291	Mickey Ferriols	MICKEY	326
Dominic Ochoa	DOMINIC	326	Asia Agcaoili	ASIA	291	Angelina Aguilar	ANGELINE	320
Dolphy	DOLPHY	326	Gwen Garci	GWEN	291	Bernadette Allyson	BERNAALLISON	326
Manny Pacquiao	PACMAN	290	Myles Hernandez	MYLES	291	Regine Tolentino	REGINET	326
Mark Bautista	MARK	291	Dina Bonnevie	DINA	320	Patrick Garcia	PATRICK	326
Sheryn Regis	SHERYN	291	Angel Aquino	ANGEL	320	Chesca Garcia	CHESCA	326
Christian Bautista	CHRISTIAN	291	Albert Martinez	ALBERT	320	Francine Prieto	FRANCINE	320
Rachelle Ann Go	RACHELLE	291	Dice & K9	DICEK9	291	Greg Martin	GREG	320
Aubrey Miles	AUBREY	326	Nina	NINA	291	Troy Montero	TROY	326
Hazel Cabrera	HAZEL	291	Art Strong	ARTSTRONG	291	Tintin Bersola	TINTINBERSOLA	326
Ara Mina	ARA	326	Kitchie Nadal	KITCHIE	291	Carmina Villaroel	CARMINA	320
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Rich Alvarez	ALVAREZ	290	Patrick Fran	FRAN	290
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FPJ left Susan Roces...

From page A1

of this is that we now see [FPJ's wife] Susan [Roces] in a different light," said Reyes.

"She had always opted to be two steps behind her husband," the director explained. "Now, we see her as a woman of courage and dignity. Her behavior and stature is incomparable."

Reyes said he watched the FPJ necrological services and burial on TV from 11 p.m. Tuesday to 6:30 a.m. Wednesday because he would rather give FPJ's family and relatives "some time and space" to be with the actor.

"I feel the burial should just be for those who are really close to FPJ and those directly related to him," he said.

Very few show biz celebrities opted to join Wednesday morning's five-kilometer funeral march from the Sto. Domingo Church in Quezon City to the Manila North Cemetery where the king of Philippine movies was laid to rest. Many of the celebrities were uncertain about their safety.

While some of them rode in cars and buses going to the cemetery, others stayed home to watch the proceedings on television, like veteran actor Robert Arevalo, who said he was glued to the TV set all night and during the morning burial.

"I found it impractical to attend the funeral because of the huge number of people," Arevalo told INQUIRER Entertainment last Wednesday. "Also, my wife [Barbara Perez] came home late from a trip to the province, and she decided to rest."

Singer-actress Cris Villonco sang at FPJ's necrological service Tuesday night, but she decided that it would be best to "just stay home" when the king of Philippine movies was buried the next day.

"That was really our plan," said Villonco, who came to the wake with her mother Monique and grandmother Armida Siguion-Reyna. "My mom and I went home because we were uncertain about the security measures [implemented during the funeral]. But my grandma was still there when we left the church at 2 a.m."

Director Joel Lamangan, who campaigned for FPJ in the May presidential election, said he left Sto. Domingo Church shortly after he delivered a poignant eulogy, saying he had a terrible headache.

"I watched the Mass on TV and then I slept," the director told INQUIRER Entertainment on Wednesday afternoon. "I went to FPJ's wake for seven nights. Each night, I would stay for about four to five hours. I was not really close to the man but during the short time we were together, I became impressed by his honesty. His death is a great loss to society."

Actors Christopher de Leon, Tirso Cruz III, Jestoni Alarcon, George Estregan Jr. and Jimmy Santos were spotted among those who joined the funeral march.

FPJ's spokesperson and Sorsogon Rep. Francis Escudero and

FPJ/ A3

BOOTS ANSON-ROA in the necrelogical service

SeeMall!

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	ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	G1 GLORIETTA 1	G4 GLORIETTA 4	GB3 GREENBELT 3	ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU
1	THX BAD SANTA	GEORGE & THE DRAGON	BIRTH	GUARANTEED SEATS THX BRIDGET JONES 2 00, 4 20, 6 40, 9 00, 11 20	CHRISTMAS WITH THE KRANKS
2	BRIDGET JONES: THE EDGE OF REASON	PASIYAM	ALEXANDER	GUARANTEED SEATS THX BAD SANTA 12 45, 2 50, 4 55, 7 00, 9 05, 11.10	PASIYAM
3	BIRTH	HAROLD & KUMAR	GUARANTEED SEATS THX BRIDGET JONES: 1 10, 3 30, 5 50, 8 10, 10 30	GUARANTEED SEATS HOUSE OF FLYING DAGGERS 1 30, 3 45, 6 00, 8 15, 10 30	OUT OF REACH
4	THE POLAR EXPRESS	HONEY	2046	GUARANTEED SEATS BIRTH 1 05, 3 10, 5 15, 7 20, 9 25, 11 30	TAXI
5	NATIONAL TREASURE		THE POLAR EXPRESS	GUARANTEED SEATS NATIONAL TREASURE 1 30, 4 00, 6 30, 9 00, 11 30	HIGHWAYMEN
6			NATIONAL TREASURE		
7			BAD SANTA		

	GB1 GREENBELT 1
1	BRIDGET JONES: THE EDGE OF REASON 12 20, 2 40, 5 00, 7 20, 9 40
2	BAD SANTA 11 20, 1 25, 3 30, 5 35, 7 40, 9 45

At the Activity Center

GLORIETTA	ALABANG TOWN CENTER	AYALA CENTER CEBU
CHRISTMAS RUSH BAZAAR 2004 December 24 to 26, 2004	BLIMS/AUTOMATIC CENTER December 13 to 26, 2004	TV ESKWELA SHOW December 29, 2004

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SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

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December 27 4:00 PM Glorietta 4 cinema lobby	SPIRIT OF THE GLASS
December 28 4:00 PM Glorietta 1 cinema lobby	ENTENG KABISOTE
December 30 12:00 NN Market! Market!	LASTIKMAN
December 30 2:00 PM Glorietta 4 cinema lobby	LASTIKMAN

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FPJ left Susan...

From page A2

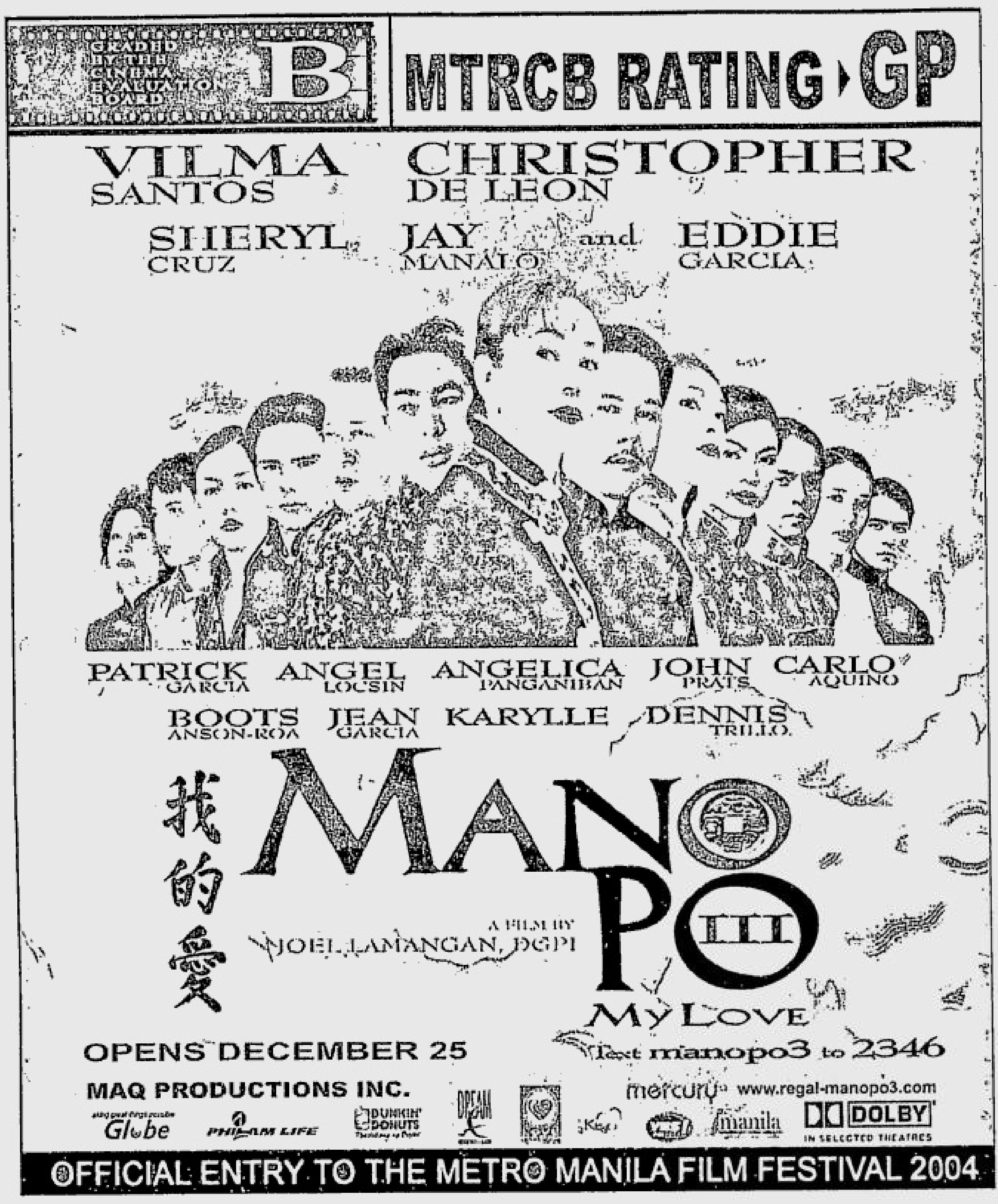
Navotas Mayor Toby Tiangco were also there.

As early as 2 a.m. Wednesday, 'some 200 FPJ fans were already waiting at the Welcome rotunda on España for the horse-drawn carriage bearing the actor's coffin. When it arrived at about 6:30 a.m., the crowd lighted candles, waved flags and chanted "FPJ! FPJ! FPJ!"

"The media did a good job in their coverage of FPJ's death," said Arevalo. "They sort of answered the people's clamor for more news about their idol. I tuned in almost everyday.

"It was nice to talk about the man," the actor added. "It's as if he's still with us."

GRIEF AND GLOOM. (From left) Richard Gomez, Zsa Zsa Padilla, Dolphy and Boots Anson-Roa



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MANO PO III
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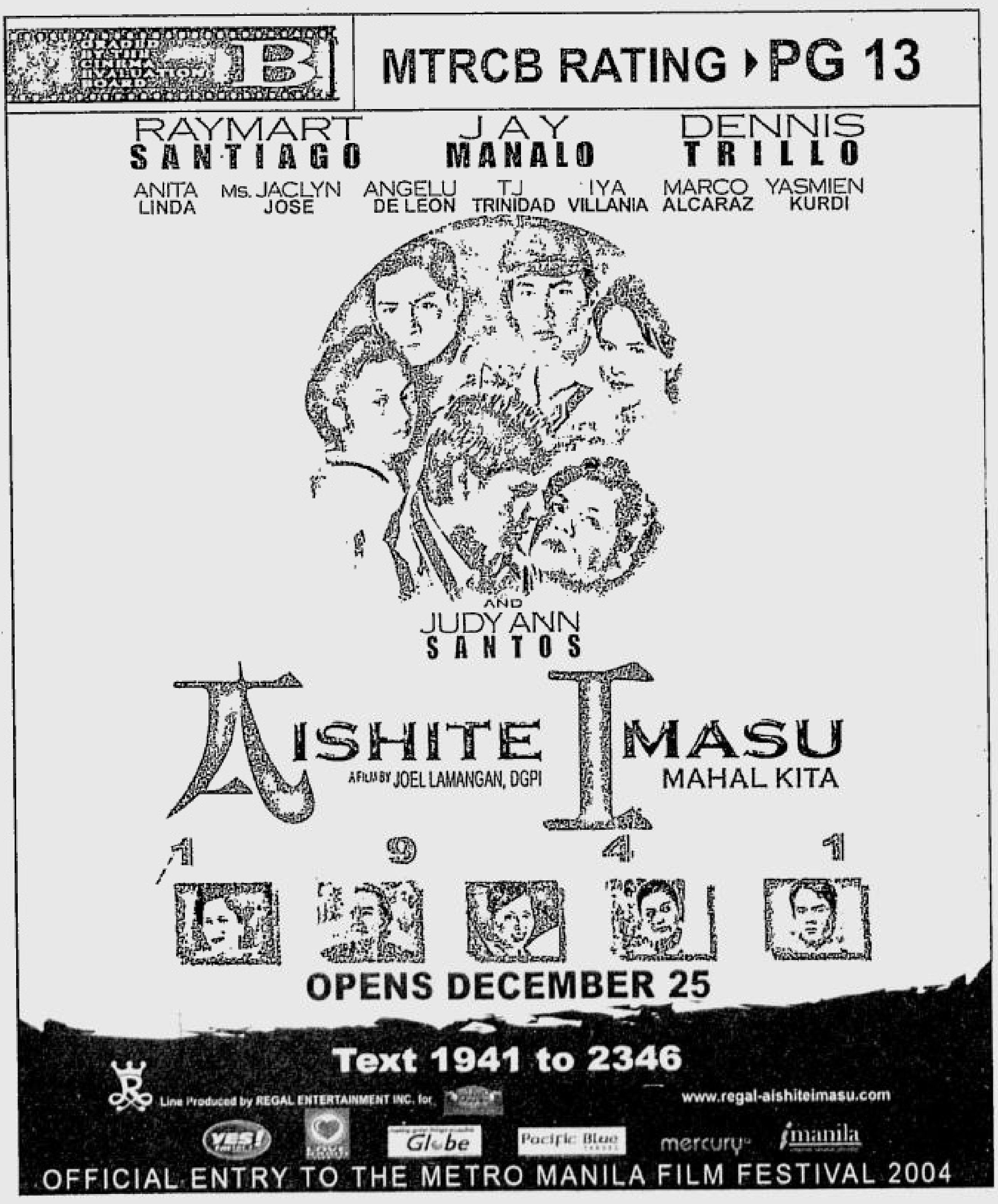

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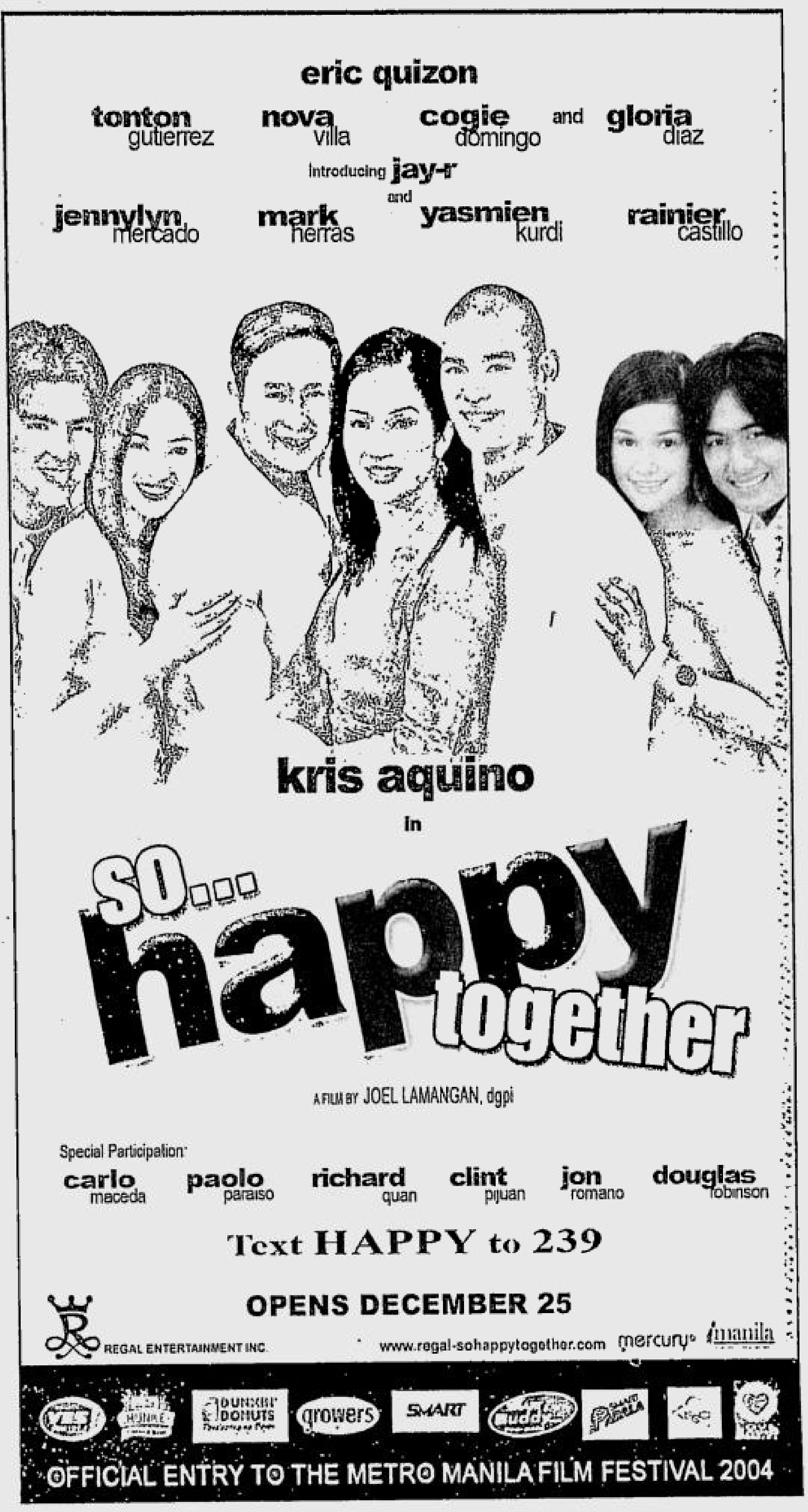

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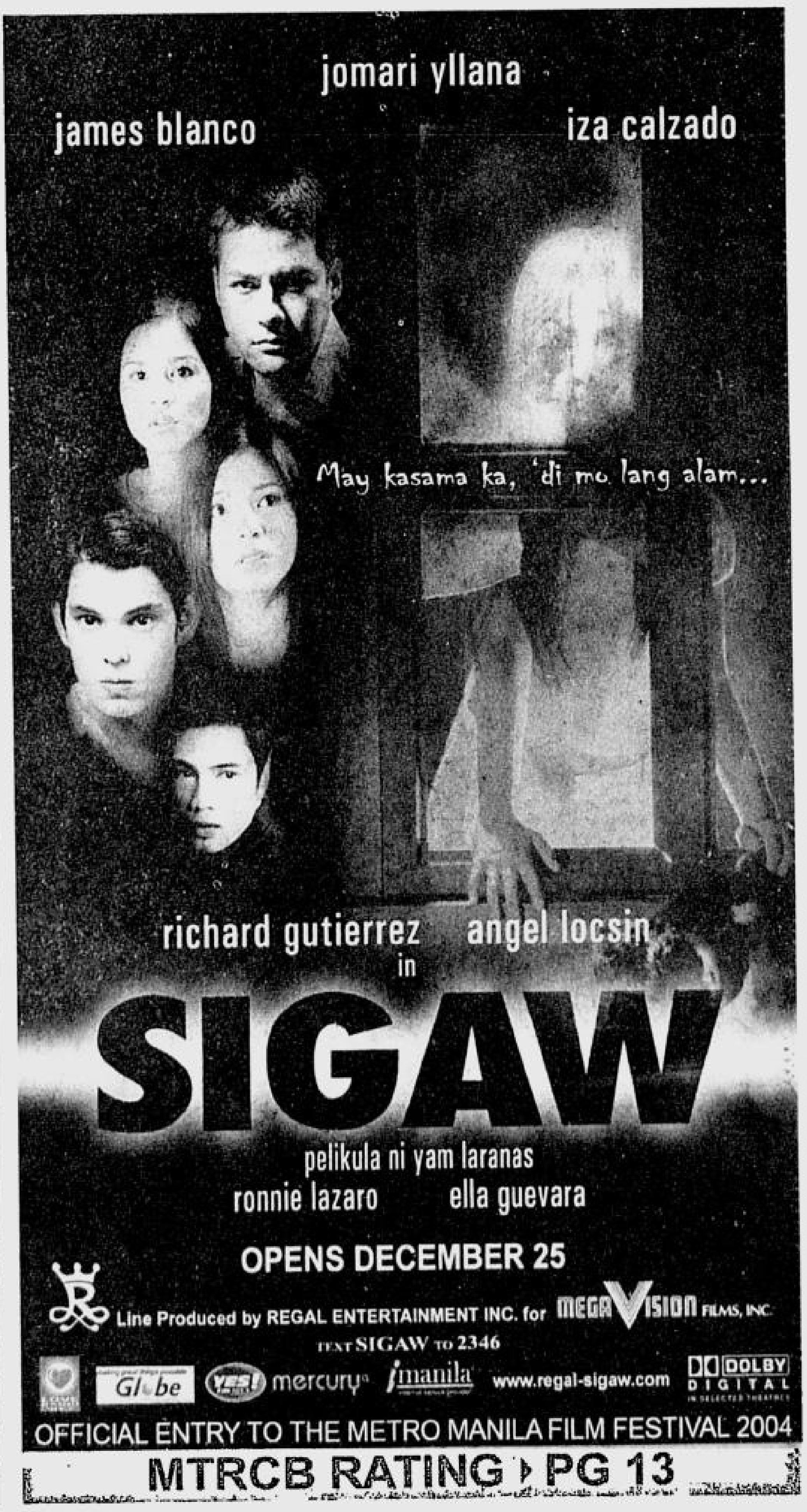

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May kasama ka, 'di mo lang alam...
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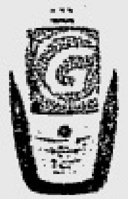
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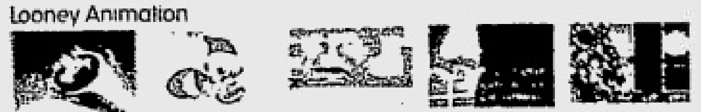
Looney Animation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Disney Wallpapers

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Smiley

smileys36 smileys38 smileys39 smileys40 smileys42

Papemelroti (via WAP only)

family xmas season blessing xmas wish merry xmas xmas peace

Anitoons (via WAP only)

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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 3265, Series of 2004.

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Editor Raul O. Marcelo
Assistant Editor Corrie S. Narisma

DOTC hits Piatco stance on Naia-3

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE DEPARTMENT of Transportation and Communication yesterday said it would help the Arroyo administration determine the appropriate amount to compensate the private consortium that built the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 3.

Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza warned that the government had reached the end of its patience in dealing with groups that have been trying to delay the operations of the Naia-3.

"The DOTC has reached the limit of its tolerance," the transport chief said.

Philippine International Air Terminal Corp. (Piatco) assailed the government on Wednesday for allegedly "railroading" the court proceedings.

"The court will form a commission with three members to determine just compensation for Piatco. The government takeover of Terminal 3 is legal following a court order granting DOTC the right to possess said property in order to uphold public interest," Mendoza said.

The transport chief said the transport agency "recognizes the right of Piatco for just compensation and will do so after a competent court has determined its real value."

Mendoza said the government would make the airport operational within six months.

"The DOTC has to strike a balance between upholding the interest of investors and protecting national interest," he added.

Alfonso Cusi, general manager of the Manila International Airport Authority, said airport authorities have started to work with engineering groups to ensure that the infrastructure was safe and secure before opening Naia-3 for commercial operations.

The government had claimed that the Naia-3 had more than 40 defects in construction.

Cusi said the government would also task an independent audit firm to conduct an inventory of the airport's facilities and equipment. The MIAA operates the Naia domestic and international airports.

The new terminal was built to replace Naia-1, which is more than 20 years old. Naia-3 is designed to handle 28 aircraft at any given time and 13 million passengers a year.

The government said that once the new terminal is operational, Naia-1 would be closed for repairs.

Trade Secretary Cesar Purisima said the other day that under the rules of court, the government could immediately take over the Naia-3 after filing the expropriation case, notifying the defendant, and paying an initial downpayment.

He promised that the government would offer just compensation to the private sector group that built the new airport terminal, as ordered by the Supreme Court last year when it nullified the government's build-operate-transfer contract signed with Piatco in 1997.

Piatco is 60-percent owned by the Cheng family, 30 percent by Fraport, and 10 percent by Nisho Iwai Corp. of Japan. The company said it would have to pay $350 million to Takenaka International Corp., a Japan-based contractor tapped to build the facility.

The Arroyo administration had offered to pay Piatco $350 million so it could operate the Naia-3, but the consortium that finished the terminal in 2002 said the amount was not enough to cover its costs.

Piatco had filed an arbitration case before the Paris-based International Chamber of Commerce.

11-month investments jump 237%

By Ronnel W. Domingo

INVESTMENTS approved in the first 11 months amounted P167.4 billion, 237 percent higher than the P49.7 billion registered in the same period last year.

Documents from the Department of Trade and Industry showed that the latest figures represented a significant recovery from the slide to P59.7 billion in 2003 against P67 billion in 2002.

The DTI did not separate numbers from the Board of Investments and the Philippine Economic Zone Authority.

There were 398 projects registered from January to November, an increase of 12.4 percent from 354 a year ago.

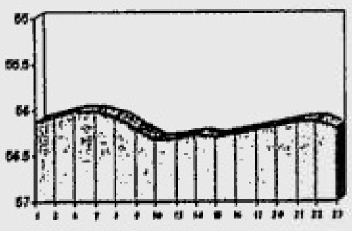
The investments are expected to provide 76,709 jobs to directly hired workers, up 38.3

11-MONTH/B2

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES

PESO-DOLLAR RATE



NOVEMBER DECEMBER

PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P 56.21 = $ 1

As of 5 p.m., Dec. 23, 2004

¥ 104.21 = $ 1

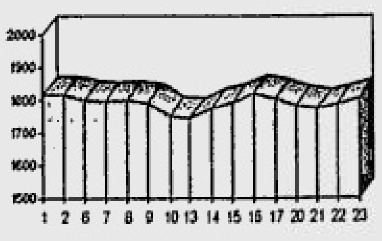
As of 5 p.m., Dec. 22, 2004

GOLD: $441.80-442.30

per ounce Hong Kong, Dec. 22, 2004

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B4).

Shares close slightly higher

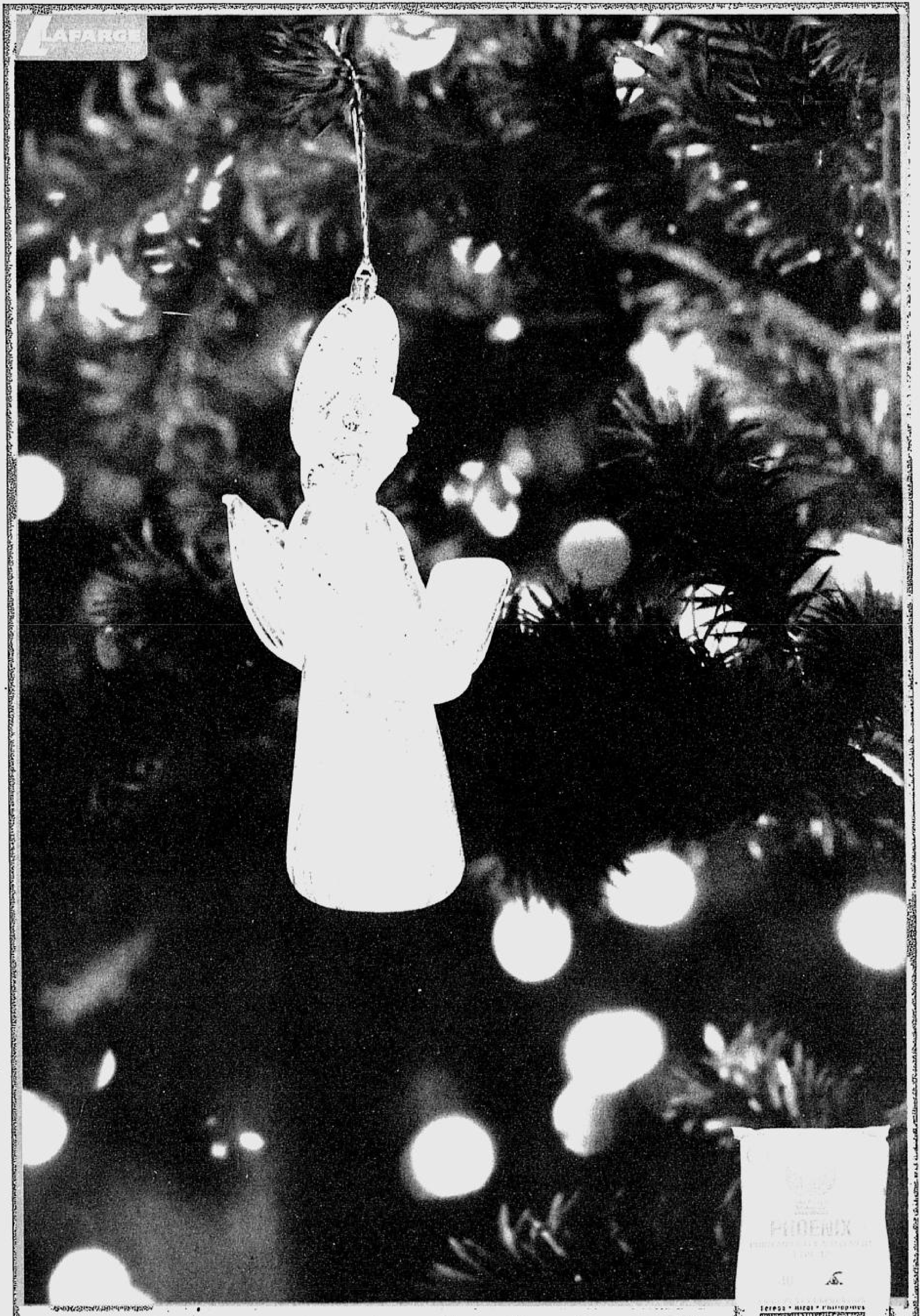
SHARE prices closed 0.99 percent higher yesterday, lifted by continued bargain-hunting and yearend window-dressing, dealers said.

They said the market will likely post further gains in the remaining two trading days of this year, but the expected rise may not be enough to break the main index's recent five-year high of 1,865.

Financial markets will be closed from Dec. 24 to 27 for the Christmas break, and will be open on the 28th and the 29th, before closing again until after the New Year.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index rose 17.75 points to 1,807.49 after trading between 1,789.74 and 1,814.04.

Volume totaled 1.38 billion shares worth P626.96 million from 1.85 billion shares worth P458.9 million on Wednesday. *AFP*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GIR seen to remain at $15B in '05

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas expects its gross international reserves to remain at $14-$15 billion in 2005, the same level targeted for this year, in view of a cautious outlook on the global business environment.

In a press briefing, BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said it would be nice if the country were to post higher growth rates in exports as this would help build up the GIR. But as the global economy appeared headed for a slowdown next year, the BSP said the country could not rely on export earnings alone to generate foreign exchange.

A regional report recently released by the Asian Development Bank said the winding down of the global electronics cycle, weaker growth in industrial countries and an economic slowdown in China would likely lead to a lower gross domestic product growth of 4.7 percent next year.

The domestic economy likely grew by 6.1 percent this year, based on the government's latest estimate.

The country's GIR slipped to a nine-month low of $15.82 billion in end-November due to outflows for public sector debt servicing. This was 0.6 percent lower than the updated level of $15.92 billion as of end-October and the $16.82 billion level posted in November last year.

The GIR—consisting of the BSP's gross foreign currency holdings, gold reserves, special drawing rights from multilateral institutions and foreign investments—is seen as an indicator of the economy's ability to service its foreign exchange requirements.

The flat GIR build-up expected by the BSP for 2005 is also related to the foreign borrowing mix planned by the national government.

"They agreed that they won't go beyond 50-50 percent, which is doable," BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said.

Proceeds from the government's foreign borrowings help boost the GIR which, in turn, cover payments for the importation of goods and debt servicing. The BSP dips into the GIR when it needs to defend the local currency from speculative attacks.

The current GIR level is still adequate to cover about 4.2 months of imports of goods as well as payments of services and income. Alternatively, this level stands 2.6 times the country's short-term debt based on original maturity and 1.4 times based on residual maturity.

Short-term debt based on residual maturity refers to outstanding short-term external debt on original maturity plus principal payments on medium- and long-term loans of the public and private sectors falling due within the next 12 months.

The slower build-up of the foreign reserves this year is partly due to the slowdown in the current account surplus, a major component of the balance of payment.

The current account records trade in goods and services as well as transfers while the capital and financial account records loan transactions, investment flows, short-term capital and other related items.

According to the BSP, the lower current account surplus this year was due to the rise in imports and did not mean that the economy was becoming less competitive in global trade. The higher import bill was also attributed to the rising oil prices.

AGGI aims to close McDonald's deal in 1st quarter

HOLDING firm Alliance Global Group Inc. (Aggi) said it was set to complete a deal for the acquisition of companies running the McDonald's franchise in the country by March next year.

However, AGGI first vice president Dina Inting said, in a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, no agreement had yet been signed between AGGI and Golden Arches Development Corp. (GADC) and Y&M Development Corp.

AGGI earlier said it would buy 49 percent of GADC, the company that operates and holds the license for McDonald's restaurants in the Philippines, and the shares of holding firm Y&M Development held by McDonald's Restaurant Operations Inc. (MRO) to position itself as a leading food service retailer.

MRO is a wholly-owned subsidiary of McDonald's Corp. and was formed as a Delaware company in 1979. It has no relationship with AGGI.

AGGI chair and shareholder George Yang is a joint venture partner of MRO in GADC, Golden Arches Realty Corp. (GARC) and Y&M Development Corp.

GARC is owned by MRO and George Yang and is a joint venture company that holds, owns and leases real estate.

Y&M Development is owned by Yang and MRO, and is a direct shareholder of a portion of shares in GADC.

Low farmgate prices, high consumer prices

COMMENTARY

By Ernesto Ordoñez

LOW farmgate prices are bad for the farmer; high retail prices are bad for the consumer. Both often blamed the middleman as the main culprit. While this is often true, in many cases, the blame is more properly be placed on other aspects of the logistics system. Examples are the faulty transportation infrastructure and antiquated methods of preventing wastage.

The huge difference between farmgate and retail prices is shown for indicative products in the table below. Compared to other countries, our margins are excessive. For example, for carrots and pork, the retail prices are double the farmgate prices.

Wastage

There are a variety of reasons why these large margins exist. Decreasing the layers of the middleman is one solution. This can be done through *bagsakan* centers, cooperative buying and selling arrangements, buy-back contracts and other similar mechanisms. Another solution is improving the physical transportation infrastructure. However, this often costs more than we can afford now with our financial crisis.

In our present situation, decreasing wastage as a way of cutting costs should be a priority area to consider. Today, wastage as measured in post harvest losses amount to the inexcusably high levels of 28 percent for fruits, 34 percent for rice, and 40 percent for vegetables.

An example

Barangay Viga of Rapu-rapu, Albay, is a coastal area where people catch and sell the Percula clown fish, popularized by the hit movie "Finding Nemo." The fisher sells each fish for P4. The middleman who sells this to the Manila buyer from the Albay site sells this for P8. Upon arriving in Manila, this fish sells for P13. Is the middleman to blame?

In this particular case, the main culprit is wastage.

Tomas Cabagay, who has successfully worked in this area, describes the situation in Albay. For more than 95 percent of the people engaged in this business, there is 30 percent mortality or wastage rate from the time the fish is caught to the time the fish leaves for Manila. This is because of poor handling systems, where the seawater is not changed efficiently.

For the surviving 70 percent that leave for Manila, one-third die for two main reasons.

The first is that the jeepneys used for transport have erratic delivery times. This is due to factors such as bad roads, the jeepneys' condition, and even the *kotongs* or bribes that are collected at numerous checkpoints. The ph level becomes unstable, which is detrimental to the fish. Often, oxygen runs out and all the fish perish.

The second reason is the decomposition of the waste excreted by the fish over many hours. This results in fatal ammonia levels.

Consequently, if 100 fish start at the village level, the number decreases to 70 prior to shipment and goes down further to 47 upon arrival in Manila. Wastage is therefore, the main reason why the P4 received by the farmer increases to P13 at the retail level.

The solution

Cabagay says he had solved both problems in Barangay Viga with very low cost methods and technologies. To solve the 30 percent mortality rate experienced while waiting for delivery, Cabagay placed the fishes in individual jars located in fish cages right inside the sea. There was no need to change the seawater. This alone brought down the 30 percent mortality to 1 percent.

To solve the 33 percent mortality of the fish shipped to Manila, Cabagay used the rail system instead of jeepneys. Since the rail time was predictable, he could plan for providing enough oxygen for the fish. He solved the ammonia level caused by the decomposition of the waste by simply not feeding the fish for three days before delivery. To stabilize the ph level, he introduced compounds into the water which had the added benefit of killing parasites and bacteria. These combined actions brought the 30 percent mortality to one percent.

Instead of a 47-percent mortality rate, this simple methods and technologies brought down the mortality rate to less than 2 percent. Therefore, the P9 difference between the farmer's P4 price and the retailer's P13 price can easily be cut by P4. The retail price could be P8 instead of P13. If the Manila market can pay P13 for this fish, the fisher can then get P8 instead of P4.

However, Cabagay says less than 5 percent of the people there are using his proven methods and technologies but that is because government extension workers are either not aware of or are not instructed to spread this knowledge. He believes it is easy to do this if only there is political will.

Conclusion

When considering cutting the wide spreads between farmgate and retail prices, expensive solutions such as improving the physical infrastructure are always considered. A recommended approach is that all possible solutions and their corresponding impacts be studied first and analyzed using a cost benefit approach. Avoiding wastage through the use of low cost methods and technologies should be a priority area to consider.

When the answer with the best Return Of Investment (ROI) has been determined, the appropriate group from the 17,000 agriculture and fishery extension workers should be harnessed to help implement the solution. This approach should be used on a specific commodity basis as soon as possible. This appears to be the best way of addressing the tremendous gap between the farmgate and retail price today, thus benefiting both the farmers and consumers.

(The author is chair of Agriwatch, a private sector initiative; former undersecretary of agriculture and trade and industry, and former chair and Cabinet secretary for Presidential Flagship Programs and Projects. For inquiries or suggestions, e-mail agriwatchphil@yahoo.com or telefax 02-8516635)

Product	farmgate	retail price	margin	farmgate % of retail
Carrots	P10	P25	P15	40%
Pork	P53	P109	P56	49%
Rice(converted from Palay)	P12	P20	P8	60%
Chicken	P63	P89	P26	71%
Bangus	P53	P75	P22	71%

11-month

From page B1

percent from 55,451 jobs in the first 11 months of 2003.

At the same time, foreign investments increased 363 percent to P137.1 billion from P29.6 billion.

Capital from local investors grew 50.7 percent to P30.3 billion from P20.1 billion.

Of the total capital committed from January to November, P115 billion or 68.9 percent were infrastructure projects in electricity, gas and water supply.

Projects in the manufacturing sector made up 22.8 percent; information technology service, 4.5 percent; real estate and renting activities, 2.6 percent, and mining and quarrying 0.9 percent.

Season's Greetings!

Asiatrust Bank announces its Banking Schedule for the Holidays:

24 December 2004, Friday	8:30AM to 12:00NN
26 December, Sunday	Regular banking hours for selected branches with Sunday banking (*Tutuban Center Mall, Nova Plaza Mall, Ever Commonwealth*)
28 & 29 December (Tues. & Wed.)	Regular banking days (8:30AM to 6:30PM)
30 & 31 December (Thurs. & Fri.)	8:30AM to 12:00NN
2 January 2005, Sunday	Regular banking hours for selected branches with Sunday banking (*Tutuban Center Mall, Nova Plaza Mall, Ever Commonwealth*)

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(As of December 23, 2004)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME.
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	2.95	2.95	2.95	2.95	2,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	26.5	26.5	26.5	26.5	28,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	51.5	51.5	51	51.5	1,517,200
China Banking Corp.	575	575	575	575	120
Citystate Savings Bank	17.25	17.25	17.25	17.25	1,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	46	49	46	48.5	91,200.
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.42	0.42	0.42	0.42	340,000
International Exch. Bank	16.75	16.75	16.75	16.75	243,400
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	27	27.5	27	27	99,400
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	13.75	13.75	13.75	13.75	5,000
Security Bank Corp.	27.5	27.5	27.5	27.5	2,900
Union Bank of the Phil.	23.5	23.5	23.5	23.5	6,300
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Bankard Inc.	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	60,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	2485	2485	2480	2480	70
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.36	1.36	1.36	1.36	100,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	110	110	110	110	50
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1815	1825	1815	1825	1,640
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	18.5	18.5	18.5	18.5	18,000
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.7	1.74	1.7	1.74	8,691,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	955	965	955	960	14,750
Ipeople Inc.	2.9	3	2.85	3	524,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.044	0.05	0.044	0.048	5,600,000
Ism Communications Corp.	0.033	0.034	0.033	0.034	700,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	39,000
Mla. Broadcasting Co.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	10,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	2.48	2.55	2.48	2.5	7,692,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1315	1340	1315	1320	76,900
Ivantage Corp.	0.69	0.69	0.68	0.68	600,000
Philweb Corp.	0.01	0.011	0.01	0.011	6,200,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	15.75	15.75	15.75	15.75	300
Manila Electric Co. B	25	25	25	25	228,700
Petron Corp.	3.15	3.25	3.15	3.2	3,042,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.7	56,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.18	1.18	1.18	1.18	204,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	100,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	0.53	0.53	0.53	0.53	50,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.72	1.72	1.72	1.72	652,000
Union Cement Corp.	1.96	1.98	1.92	1.96	821,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	31	31	30.5	30.5	1,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	28	29	28	29	545,100
San Miguel Corp. A	58	59	58	59	144,900.
San Miguel Corp. B	75	75	74	74	9,700
Vitarich Corp.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	1,000,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.005	0.005	0.0048	0.0048	141,000,000
Ayala Corp.	6.5	6.6	6.5	6.5	11,378,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	3.2	3.3	3.2	3.3	1,216,000
A. Soriano Corp.	1.58	1.58	1.5	1.5	9,000
APC Group Inc.	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	1,900,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.68	1.68	1.68	1.68	55,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	16	16	16	16	11,600
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.1	0.105	0.1	0.105	1,450,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.67	0.67	0.67	0.67	2,810,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.215	0.215	0.215	0.215	80,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	1,000,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.8	3.8	3.7	3.7	1,361,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	500,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1	1.02	1	1.02	260,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp.	4.65	4.75	4.65	4.7	667,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	30.5	31	30.5	30.5	475,600
Macroasia Corp.	2.44	2.55	2.4	2.46	5,296,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. B	0.015	0.015	0.015	0.015	1,000,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.24	1.26	1.24	1.26	2,007,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.33	0.33	0.31	0.32	20,930,000
Prime Media Holdings Inc.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	20,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.145	0.145	0.145	0.145	100,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.83	0.85	0.83	0.85	170,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.135	500,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.16	0.17	0.16	0.17	140,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	3,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Bella Corp.	0.61	0.61	0.61	0.61	1,470,000
Acesite Phils Hotel Corp.	11	11	11	11	800
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	1.08	1.08	1	1.04	3,738,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.57	0.57	0.57	0.57	90,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.28	0.28	830,000
Philippine Racing Club	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	14,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp.(Pdr)	18.75	18.75	18.5	18.75	437,000
Macroasia Corp. Warrants	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	50,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series R	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series S	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,000
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	8.5	9	8.5	8.9	236,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	7	7.1	7	7.1	3,903,000
C&P Homes Inc.	0.235	0.235	0.225	0.23	5,820,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.145	0.145	0.135	0.135	1,590,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	850,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.1	1.16	1.1	1.14	8,723,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.51	0.51	0.51	0.51	590,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	40,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.19	0.2	0.19	0.2	120,000
SM Development Corp.	1.4	1.42	1.4	1.42	1,411,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7.7	7.8	7.7	7.8	9,641,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	0.38	0.39	0.38	0.39	100,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc.B	0.4	0.42	0.38	0.4	330,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.012	84,500,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	3.85	3.85	3.75	3.75	4,000
Benguet Corp. A	3.25	3.4	3.25	3.4	58,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	3.45	3.45	3.45	3.45	3,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.35	0.37	0.34	0.35	62,090,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.45	0.46	0.43	0.43	45,560,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.019	0.019	0.019	0.019	399,300,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.027	0.027	0.027	0.027	257,400,000
Omico Corp.	0.0046	0.0048	0.0046	0.0046	128,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.67	0.7	0.67	0.69	5,730,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.71	0.75	0.71	0.75	13,780,000
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.2	0.2	0.19	0.19	800,000
OIL					
Interport Res. B	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	25,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0048	0.0048	0.0048	0.0048	11,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0048	0.0048	0.0048	0.0048	30,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	280,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	2.3	2.34	2.3	2.34	39,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.045	0.055	0.045	0.048	48,900,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	520,000

DISCLOSURES

CITYLAND Development Corp. reported that its January to November sales performance was 118 percent higher than the year-ago figure. The November sales level, however, was lower than year-ago level.

* * *

CITY and Land Developers Inc. said it was still waiting for the approval by the Securities and Exchange Commission of its plan to issue P750 million worth of short-term commercial papers.

* * *

PNOC Exploration Corp. confirmed that it was negotiating with a South Korean consortium for the sale of 49 percent of its 10 percent participation in service contract no. 38, which covers the Malampaya oil and gas field project.

* * *

LEPANTO Consolidated Mining Co. said it had no plan to declassify its Class A and B shares.

* * *

MICHAEL Garcia, vice president of International Exchange Bank, disposed of 248,000 shares of the bank at P16.75 each. ***Compiled by: D.J. Yap, PDI Research***

CURRENCIES

December 23, 2004 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.746882	1.000000	56.1440
Japan	Yen	0.007169	0.009598	0.5389
United Kingdom	Pound	1.430055	1.914700	107.4989
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.095983	0.128512	7.2152
Switzerland	Franc	0.647941	0.867528	48.7065
Canada	Dollar	0.601742	0.805672	45.2336
Singapore	Dollar	0.455555	0.609942	34.2446
Australia	Dollar	0.572191	0.766107	43.0123
Bahrain	Dinar*	1.981224	2.652661	148.9310
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.199163	0.266660	14.9714
Brunei	Dollar	0.454170	0.608088	34.1405
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000080	0.000107	0.0060
Thailand	Baht	0.019128	0.025611	1.4379
UAE	Dirham	0.203377	0.272301	15.2881
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.338900	75.1712
Argentina	Peso	0.252197	0.337667	18.9580
Brazil	Real	0.276213	0.369822	20.7633
Denmark	Kroner	0.134510	0.180096	10.1113
India	Rupee	0.017056	0.022836	1.2821
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.196574	0.263193	14.7767
Mexico	New Peso	0.067039	0.089759	5.0394
New Zealand	Dollar	0.532460	0.712911	40.0257
Norway	Kroner	0.120601	0.161473	9.0657
Pakistan	Rupee	0.012542	0.016793	0.9428
South Africa	Rand	0.132247	0.177066	9.9412
Korea	Won	0.000710	0.000950	0.0533
Sweden	Kroner	0.110786	0.148331	8.3279
Syria	Pound	0.014388	0.019264	1.0816
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.023152	0.030998	1.7404
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000390	0.000522	0.0293

Another Razon to rejoice

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

THE PHILIPPINES' ICTSI of Enrique Razon Jr. and the Sorianos has just been awarded the Okinawa container cargo terminal contract by the Japanese government.

The Okinawan port of Naha should add around 10 percent more business to the ICTSI Group when the Japanese venture starts operation by Jan. 1, 2006, according to the grapevine.

ICTSI now operates the containerized cargo terminals in the ports of Suape, Brazil, and Gdynia, Poland, in addition to the hometown ports in North Harbor, Subic and Bauan, Batangas.

The Okinawa port victory came right after ICTSI had been short-listed but eventually lost in the international bidding for the worldwide assets of US rail giant CSX, which divested itself of container cargo terminal operations spread around the globe.

News of the Okinawa victory was made public after the local stock market had closed. ICTSI closed yesterday at P5.70, unchanged from the previous day. The stock has more than doubled from its 52-week low of P2.75.

ICTSI has also submitted a bid to operate the containerized cargo terminal of the port of Corpus Christi, Texas.

Architectural misimpressions

ARCHITECT Jose Mañosa should not mope about Barangay Urdaneta discarding his architectural plans for the Friendship Hall of the Urdaneta Village since there are no Manosa plans or drawings to discard to begin with, according to barangay captain Angela Regala.

Manosa not only questioned the missing professional credits (Cocktales, Dec. 22, 2004), the architect even hired the law firm of Cayanga, Zuniga & Angel to ask the Urdaneta Village Homeowners Association why barangay functionaries had instead been credited for the renovation plans.

According to Regala, the village association commissioned Manosa, but the barangay, which was funding the renovation, decided to scale down and instead rely on plans drawn up by the city engineering department.

"We have never had any arrangement with architect Manosa," Regala wrote, adding that the renovation simply involved the installation of glass doors, windows and airconditioning units in the village hall.

Neighborly jump

THE PRESIDENT of Philippine Townships, Raul Martinez, is leaving the Concepcion company to join and help revive Philippine Realty of the Lanuzas after being offered a partnership status.

Philtown developed One McKinley and the still rising Fairways Tower in the Fort, while Philrealty plans to build two condos in what is now the parking lot between the Pacific Plaza Towers and UCC Café.

Incidentally, the planned Philrealty condos are right across from the rotunda from One McKinley.

Heard through the grapevine

ORTIGAS landlord Leonardo Umale has stepped on a lot of big toes, the latest being those of Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson's.

* * *

Cocktales will take a holiday break and will be back on Jan. 3, 2005.

(Email: cocktales_pdi@pldtdsl.net or cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com)

New revenue-sharing deal boosts Piltel revenue by ₱7B

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE REVISED scheme for revenue sharing and management charges between the wireless units of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. will add P7 billion to the coffers of Pilipino Telephone Corp. this year.

Piltel chair Manuel Pangilinan said that with the new agreement on revenue sharing, Piltel will end up with a net income of P7.74 billion in the first three quarters, from P743 million.

The board of directors of Piltel and Smart last Wednesday approved the plan to shift 80 percent of wireless revenue to Piltel, from the previous 50-50 sharing, as payment for Piltel's use of Smart's cellular infrastructure and facilities.

The new agreement would also cover the management fees being charged to Piltel for network maintenance, customer care and general administration.

"This change will result in the reflection of a positive P3.3 billion adjustment to Piltel's operating results for the period January to September," said Piltel in a statement.

"In addition, Smart shall compensate Piltel P3.7 billion representing Piltel's equitable share of revenues as a result of it having achieved a critical mass of subscribers and resultant economies of scale earlier than anticipated," the company statement added.

Changes in revenue arrangement between Piltel and Smart Communications Inc. would likewise allow Piltel to make full use of P4.3 billion in tax breaks following years of losses.

About P4.3 billion in Piltel's tax breaks would lapse by 2005.

Piltel had been in the red since 1997 and the net loss last year reached P3.35 billion.

Mobile sales now make up 87 percent of Piltel's revenue after its subscriber base reached 4.2 million in end-September.

Together with Smart, PLDT's wireless subscribers stood at 17.5 million by the end of the fourth quarter.

"The earnings would be reflected in PLDT since the group had consolidated the books of its wireless business. There are some leaks because about 8 percent of Piltel is owned by the public," said Pangilinan.

Piltel shares closed at P2.50 yesterday, up from P2.46 Wednesday.

This year, Piltel's share price had surged by more than 100 percent.

But Smart bought a 47-percent stake in Piltel, from PLDT for only 20.59 centavos per share.

Cargill sees better year for feeds in '05

By Christine A. Gaylican

ANIMAL feeds manufacturer Cargill Philippines, which markets the Purina line, expects a 10-percent increase in its sales next year as raisers increase their hog population.

Cargill product manager Sonny Q. Catacutan told the INQUIRER yesterday that the increase in the selling prices of hogs in the second half of the year has encouraged livestock raisers to boost production.

Catacutan said increased production would boost demand for animal feeds next year by about 25,000 metric tons.

"We see the year to be positive as hog prices, which went over P95 to P100 per kilogram at the farmgate, urged raisers to improve on production," Catacutan said.

Cargill Philippines is the local unit of Cargill Inc., an international marketer, processor and distributor of agricultural, food, financial and industrial products and services. It operates in 60 countries.

In the Philippines, Cargill produces feeds for the livestock, poultry and aquaculture sectors, such as the Purina and Pork Focus feeds.

Cargill Philippines said it was close to getting a HACCP (Hazard Analysis in Central Control Points) certification from the Societe Generale de Surveillance (SGS), which will make it the first feedmilling company in the Philippines to have all of its plants HACCP-certifed.

Benel Angeles, Cargill Philippines central laboratory head, said a HACCP certification will further bolster the company's position as one of the country's world-class feedmilling operators.

"Our efforts to be HACCP-certified is part of the company's global initiative to promote food safety, starting with our animal feed products," said Angeles.

HACCP is a management system designed for use in all segments of the food industry, including animal production.

With HACCP, food safety is addressed through the analysis and control of biological, chemical and physical hazards, from processing of raw materials and manufacturing, to product packaging and distribution.

Angeles said that with the system's implementation in all of its plants and facilities in the Philippines, HACCP will minimize or totally eliminate the feeds' possible contamination from biological hazards like bacteria, pathogens and mycotoxins, chemical hazards like pesticides, animal drugs and physical hazards like stones, glass, pieces of wood and other foreign materials.

In working to get a HACCP certificate from SGS, Angeles said Cargill Philippines is being assisted by the company's central laboratory experts in its Pulilan, Bulacan, plant.

"We are being helped by our experts from the central laboratory. They support our biodiversity and HACCP endeavors by managing the quality assurance of feed products.

The laboratory tests raw materials for protein, fiber, fast, ash, mineral and vitamin contents.

They also ensure the raw materials' correct processing and oversees the quality control of the finished feed product," said Angeles.

The Pulilan plant has an ISO-17025 certification and is so far the only ISO-certified feed mill plant laboratory in the country.

Among Cargill's more than 40 laboratories worldwide, the Philippine laboratory scored the highest in terms of safety and second highest in terms of quality.

Teves asks fisherfolk to get loans

DAGUPAN CITY—The Land Bank of the Philippines has asked small fishermen, one of the priority sectors of the government-run bank, to avail themselves of loans for their fishing business needs.

Margarito Teves, LBP president, said the fishery sector has not been fully reached by the bank and only a few fishermen cooperatives have applied for loans.

"That is why we need our partners like rural financial institutions who know the small fishermen better to assist us in reaching out to them," Teves told reporters here.

Fishery is a booming industry here, with the city's rivers used for aquaculture.

Mayor Benjamin Lim said the local government has passed an ordinance that 'leveled' the playing field for the fishery industry.

There was a time when only the big capitalists used the rivers for fish culture.

But with the fishery ordinance, even small fishermen can build their own fishery structures in the rivers, he said.

Lim, however, said the lack of capital made it difficult for small fishermen to put up their own fishery structures.

"They used to be mere *componidor* (caretakers) of the fish pens owned by the big capitalists who provide the nets, bamboos, feeds and stocks," Lim said. "The missing component is financing."

Teves assured Lim that the LBP would extend loans to the city's small fishermen. Teves said in the last two years, many borrowers have availed themselves of loans from the LBP for the small- and medium-scale enterprises.

"This is, perhaps, because we reduced the processing time and we have become liberal with the collateral requirements. These attract the cooperatives and micro businessmen who (we also help) in conducting feasibility studies or creating business plans," he said.

The LBP has a standing P417-million loan in Pangasinan—P212 million extended to cooperatives and P205 million representing livelihood projects and salary loans.

Teves said most of the deposits generated in the Ilocos are plowed back to the region as loans.

He said that last year, the deposit to loan ratio was P5.2 to P1 (meaning, for every P5.2 deposit, P1 is borrowed by residents in Ilocos).

"Now, the ratio is P4.2 to P1," Teves said.

Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

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Investments of Variable Life Insurance Contracts	Current Week December 21, 2004	Last Week December 14, 2004
Bond Fund - Peso	1.16413	1.16271
Managed Fund - Peso	1.25280	1.25096
Bond Fund - US Dollar	1.0625	1.0604

* Note: These investments of variable life insurance contracts are not mutual funds. Life insurance products are regulated by the Insurance Commission

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Divisoria - Sta. Elena (9am - 12 nn)
Greenhills (9am - 1 pm)
Ilaya (9 am - 12 nn)
J. Abad Santos (9am - 3 pm)
Marikina (9am - 12 nn)
Sto. Cristo (9am - 12nn)

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SM Southmall (10am - 2pm)
Tutuban Center (10am - 2pm)
Tutuban Prime (10am - 2pm)

December 30
Marikina (9 am - 12 nn)

December 31
Divisoria - Sta. Elena (9am - 12 nn)
Sto. Cristo (9am - 12 nn)
Tutuban Center (9am - 12 nn)
Tutuban Prime (9am - 12 nn)

PROVINCIAL BRANCHES

December 27
Cabanatuan City (9 am - 3 pm)
Cagayan De Oro - Lapasan (9 am - 12 nn)
Cebu - Talisay (10 am - 2 pm)
Laoag (9am - 12 nn)
Tacloban (9am - 12 nn)

ALL China Bank Mall branches:
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Cebu - Lahug (JY Square Mall) (10am - 2pm)
Cebu - Lapu-Lapu (Gaisano Mall) (10am - 2pm)
Cebu - SM City (10am - 2pm)
Marilao - SM City (10am - 2pm)

December 30
Cabanatuan - Maharlika (9 am - 12 nn)

December 31
Bacolod-Araneta (9am - 12nn)
Laoag (9am - 12nn)

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BUSINESS Friday

Business Features Editor Margie Quimpo-Espino

Taxpayers as tax collectors

By Noel P. Rabaja and Racquel A. Endaya
SGV & Co.

TAX-FILES

UNDER the withholding tax system, payors of the income are entrusted by the government as its withholding agents. As such, these withholding agents are held responsible to collect the tax on behalf of the government and remit the same on a periodic basis (e.g., monthly). The taxes collected are considered trust funds for the government to be maintained by the withholding agents in separate accounts until the time of remittance to the Bureau of Internal Revenue's collecting officers. In other words, the taxpayers serve as the bureau's tax collectors as far as withholding taxes are concerned.

Withholding taxes can be categorized into three classes: expanded, final and withholding tax on compensation. Expanded withholding tax (or EWT, for brevity) applies to income payments to resident corporations and individuals other than employees. Withholding tax on compensation applies to employees. Both expanded withholding tax and withholding tax on compensation are in the nature of advance payment of income tax due from the income recipient, and therefore creditable against the income tax liability of the said income recipient. On the other hand, final withholding tax applies to income payments subject to final tax, such as payments to non-residents. This means the tax withheld by the withholding agent is constituted as the full and final payment of the income tax due from the income recipient.

Taxpayers, particularly corporations, are often confronted with the issue on whether or not to withhold on their income payments. The bureau issued various regulations and memorandum circulars on withholding tax.

General rule

Under Section 2.57.3 of Revenue Regulations (RR) No. 2-98, otherwise known as the Consolidated Withholding Tax Regulations, the following persons are constituted as withholding agents for purposes of creditable withholding taxes:

a. In general, any juridical person, whether or not engaged in trade or business;

b. An individual, with respect to payments made in connection with his trade or business. However, insofar as taxable sale, exchange or transfer of real property is concerned, individual buyers who are not engaged in trade or business are also constituted as withholding agents;

c. All government offices including government-owned or -controlled corporations, as well as provincial, city and municipal governments.

'Control over the payment'

In various rulings issued by the bureau, it was emphasized that the person (may be an individual or a corporation) who had control over the payment was the one primarily responsible to withhold the tax and remit the same to the bureau. Let us take as an example the case where a custom's broker advances the payment to a forwarder for its importer-client. Under RR No. 2-98, payment for forwarding services is subject to 2 percent EWT. In this case, the custom's broker may be considered as the withholding agent for the 2 percent EWT since it is the one who has the direct control over the payment to the forwarder.

New Rule—RR No. 30-2003

With the issuance of RR No. 30-2003, the rules seem to have changed. Section 5 states "All income payments which are required to be subjected to withholding tax shall be subject to the corresponding withholding tax rate to be withheld by the person having control over the payment and who, at the same time, claims the expenses, xxx."

In the sample case cited above, the custom's broker, although having the direct control over the payment to the forwarder, does not claim the expense but merely advances the payment to the forwarder, and reimburses the same from the importer-client. A question now arises as to who is the proper withholding agent in this kind of transaction. In this regard, RR No. 30-2003 amends Section 2.57.3 of RR No. 2-98 to provide additional rules as follows: "Agents, employees or any person purchasing goods or services/paying for and in behalf of the aforesaid withholding agents shall likewise withhold in their behalf, provided that the official receipts of payment/sales invoice shall be issued in the name of the person whom the former represents and the corresponding certificate of taxes withheld (BIR Form No. 2307) shall immediately be issued upon withholding of the tax."

From the foregoing amendment, it seems that the custom's broker remains to be the person primarily responsible to withhold the 2 percent EWT from the payment to the forwarder since the direct control of payment lies with him. However, the actual remittance of the withheld tax to the bureau and the issuance of the corresponding withholding tax certificate to the forwarder are the responsibilities of the importer-client being the one claiming the expense. Stated otherwise, the responsibility of the custom's broker is merely to withhold and issue the withholding tax certificate in behalf of the importer-client. Note that the official receipt/sales invoice is required to be issued in the name of the importer-client. This is an indication that the bureau may indeed have intended to place the burden of remitting the withholding tax to the importer-client who is the one claiming the expense.

The foregoing rule also holds true in the case where two or more persons share an expense which is subject to EWT. A classic example of this scenario is the payment for security services (which is subject to 2 percent EWT) if the facility is being occupied by two or more companies. There is an issue if one party initially advances the payment to the security agency and simply reimburses from the other companies their respective share in the expense. Under the old rule, the advancing party was considered as the withholding agent for the entire payment to the security agency, and was the one required to issue the corresponding withholding tax certificate. Likewise, he was responsible to remit the withheld tax to the bureau. With the issuance of RR No. 30-2003, all parties sharing the expense are now considered as withholding agents. Based on the pertinent provision, income payments subject to withholding shall include "payments made by persons who are sharing portion of the bill which is in the name of another person as long as he is a duly constituted withholding agent and shall only withhold on the portion of the expense being shouldered by him." This may elicit question of how the withholding shall be carried out considering that the control of payment to the security agency lies solely in the hands of the advancing party. As in the case of the previous example on custom's broker, the responsibility of the advancing party is merely to withhold and issue the withholding tax certificate in behalf of the other parties to the extent of their respective share in the expense, but the actual remittance of the related withheld tax to the bureau shall be the responsibility of all the parties sharing the expense. This is consistent with the provision mentioned earlier that the party who claims the expense is generally the one responsible to remit the withholding tax to the bureau.

Failure to withhold

Note that the impact of the failure to withhold is not only a possible deficiency withholding tax assessment from the bureau, but also a possible disallowance of the related expense as deduction for income tax purposes. This is based on Section 34(K) of the amended National Internal Revenue Code (NIRC) as implemented by Section 2.58.5 of RR No. 2-98. As such, it is imperative for the taxpayers, as withholding agents of the bureau, to prove that the expenses they claim as deductions for income tax purposes are subjected to the appropriate withholding taxes.

Much has been written about withholding tax yet the subject just could not seem to rest in peace. It has always brought forth questions not only from the income recipients subjected to withholding, but also from the taxpayers who are constituted as withholding agents. Indeed, the issues inherent to the withholding tax system are something that taxpayers, as the bureau's "tax collectors," have to live with.

Staying on top by making children look like kids

By Margie Quimpo-Espino

A TOP marketing executive recently commented on a billboard showing a girl, about 8 years old, dressed up in a teenager's garb—short skirt, fitted shirt, face with lip gloss and blush.

He wondered out loud why parents want their children to look older, as if rushing them to grow up, when kids are naturally beautiful.

Dressing up kids to make them look older is common not just in the Philippines but in other countries as well. One children's clothing store that has managed to help make kids look like kids via its products is OshKosh B'gosh Inc., the 109-year-old firm that originated from a town in Wisconsin, United States, called Oshkosh.

Founded in 1895, OshKosh B'Gosh, Inc. has grown from a small-town manufacturer of adult workwear into a global marketer of children's clothing and accessories. Known for its rugged, men's hickory-striped bib overalls, OshKosh began making the pint size version in the early 1900's, so that children could dress like their fathers. It wasn't until Miles Kimball, a local mail order firm, featured a pair of children's bib overalls in its national catalog that sales of the item took off. Prompted by the strong response, OshKosh B'Gosh expanded distribution into specialty and department stores, and gradually broadened its children's line.

Alison G. Larson, managing director for International Business Development of OshKosh recently flew to Manila for the opening of the new OshKosh concept store at the Gateway in Cubao. She met with Business Friday to talk about the children's wear industry and what it's like to spend half of her time travelling.

"OshKosh is a very ethical company which is nice to work for. It is very different from other New York companies which are sleek," Larson says of her employer the past 15 years.

She admits though that before they moved their office to the Empire State Building, they were not attracting enough young people for their design department.

JANET Coronel, Alison Larson and Grace C. Agbayani

Larson says the '70s and '80s saw a kick in the children's wear. "It was in the '80s that the market exploded."

From then on, the men's line took a backseat to the children's line. OshKosh however still carries adult clothes in some markets and even have a maternity line. But in the Philippines, they only carry the children's line via their partner, Cinderella.

Grace Coronel Agbayani, managing director for Cinderella Dresses Inc. says sale of the children's line has been on a continuous uptrend, rising about about 10 percent every year. She admits this comes with opening of several new outlets yearly.

There are 86 outlets for OshKosh in the country with 11 free standing shops.

On the other hand, Larson says 2003 was a tough year for OshKosh in the US but 2004 is turning out to be a good year. She said the 9-11 tragedy in 2001 affected the economy for the succeeding years.

Their focus is the zero to seven year old market but in the Philippines their sizes fit up to young teens.

Larson says although they put in trendy designs in their clothes, the bulk remain the classic barn-style clothes that are denim-based. In the Philippines, Agbayani says their most saleable items are still the shirts.

In the US, Larson says their gift packs are popular. All designs come from the US but the local markets are allowed certain flexibility to make the clothes cater more to the local tastes.

It is Larson's job to go around the different market, and she says half of the time she is out. "Travelling a lot, you have to be able to move and change and be adaptable to your surroundings."

To cope with jet lag, she psychs up herself to the new time by sleeping on the plane if she knows she is arriving in the morning. Or staying awake in the plane if she will arrive in the evening.

Although she has her laptop, her basic tools remain pen and paper. She is set to move to Brussels by next year as OshKosh is developing the European market.

THE 50-YEAR-OLD Philippine Marketing Association recently celebrated the 25th Agora Awards by gathering together past and present marketing awardees (in photos).

This year's awardees were Philip Young, president and COO of Festive Foods International Inc. for export marketing; Anastacio Martirez, head of personal communications and mobile services division at Smart Communications Inc., for marketing management, Roberto Gandionco, president and CEO of Julie's Franchise Corp. for entrepreneurship (large scale) and Henry Lim Bon Liong of SL Agritech for entrepreneurship (medium scale).

Another first was having two recipients of the Marketing Company of the Year Award: Megaworld Corp. and Mercury Drug Corp. SM Foundation, SM Mall's socio-civic arm, conferred the Outstanding Achievement Award for Advocacy Marketing.

There's hope for Filipino shoemakers

OVER the years, the Philippines earned a reputation as one of the best shoe producers in the world. Primarily because of the then-thriving Marikina footwear industry, the country became a major shoe exporter to the US, where its brands became the talk of Fifth Avenue in New York, and other countries in the mid-80s. At one time, the country's shoe exports reached $200 million.

Back then local shoemakers earned the monicker, "Italians of Asia," because of the designs and artistry shown via the shoes.

However, that is not the case anymore. Today, the local shoe industry is suffering from the influx of cheap, imported shoes, and is slowly succumbing to competition, mainly from China, where shoe factories whip up more than 5 billion pairs of cheap shoes every year, virtually gaining control of half the global market's footwear needs, according to ShoeInfo.Net.

Consumers, naturally went for cheaper shoes.

But some foreigners still believe that locally-made shoes can hit it big over the Chinese-made brands, especially in other high-profile markets like Europe, if given enough exposure.

This was the impression of German shoe trade fair experts from Messe Düsseldorf GmbH, organizers of the highly successful GDS The Premier Shoe Event, whose latest edition will happen on March 17-20, 2005 in Düsseldorf, Germany. The Philippines' participation also marks the country's return to the fair, who last participated 15 years ago.

"I believe it's time Philippine shoe makers look at other markets, and Europe is a very bright and interesting prospect. The European taste is on the stylish side, and Filipino shoe products, known for their unique style and innovativeness, can cash in on this," states Hendrik Schellkes, exhibition manager for Messe Düsseldorf in an interview during a seminar, which he and Peter Kern, a renowned footwear expert, held for Philippine participants to the upcoming international trade fair.

During the seminar, Schellkes said Europe already noticed the proliferation of good, high-quality products from Asia, particularly in the Philippines. "Other Asean countries, Malaysia, for example, have already established a foothold in Europe. In fact, they have already found a niche-in sandals-and we would like to see the Philippines do the same," says Schellkes.

He adds that regarding competition from China, the country should avoid China because it cannot compete in a price war. "China's goods are priced much lower, and you cannot compete with that. What's best is to be around the most trendy, fashionable and good-quality market, but offer products that are reasonably priced. By offering more innovative shoe designs, it would be easy to get a slice of the European market, composed mostly of French and Italian buyers who are always on the lookout for new and innovative products from other markets," Schellkes said.

Schellkes was particularly emphatic about the Philippines' participation to the fair, which he said was very timely, considering the tremendous development of the local shoe industry. The European market is watching the Philippine shoe industry and is aware of its reputation, he said.

"The more important thing here is to create impact in Europe by presenting quality-made products above everything else. Of course, they (Filipino shoemakers) should be able to make considerable profit," Schellkes adds.

Marikina City and its mayor, Maria Lourdes Fernando, leads local shoemakers' who are taking part in the fair to ensure the success of the country's participation.

GDS The Premier Shoe Event is the largest and leading shoe fair in the world, where 50 countries have showcased their products for the past 50 years. GDS The Premier Shoe Event puts on display a wide spectrum of footwear, from sophisticated high heels to comfort shoes like sneakers. Products in the fair are classified into three segments—modern, young, and global sources—with a diversity that visitors will find suitable to their liking. Next year's event have already attracted 1,500 exhibitors, where they will present their latest collections to more than 40,000 international buyers.

Samsung grants $66,000 to Altiora Quaero Foundation and Don Bosco Makati

THE GREAT divide.

It is that barrier separating the privileged from the less fortunate; the gap between the educated and the deprived. Indeed, in today's technology-driven world, this gap still exists.

It's no surprise actually, because, to gain access to technology and knowledge of it, economics is a major consideration. This explains that segment of that great divide called the digital divide-that chasm distancing the techno-educated from the techno-deprived.

A lot of measures have been taken to address this problem including the implementation of various community-based projects by organizations geared towards educating the youth in information technology. The Altiora Quaero Foundation Inc and the Salesians of St. John Bosco Northern Province are two of these organizations. Both recently received grants from Samsung DigitAll Hope 2004, a regional social responsibility program of Samsung Electronic Ltd to fund their projects.

Inaugurated last year, the project offers both monetary and product grants to any deserving non-government organization, charitable or educational institution, whose projects are screened and selected from among other grant applications. It is basically hinged upon the enrichment of communities and individual lives of youths and handicapped people within the Asia Pacific rim via technology, thus bridging the digital divide still prevalent in societies.

The Salesians of St. John Bosco is a religious organization. Its project, titled "Institutionalizing the Use of E-Learning for Out of School Training for Better Effectivity with Cost Efficiency in the Philippines", sets it goals on expanding the e-learning system to reach more out-of-school youths in the country by opening a network of learning centers for this marginalized sector outside the Don Bosco system.

Its previous project, the Samsung e-lab, was the recipient of last year's grant. Samsung e-lab is an electronic training laboratory for the computer education of disadvantaged youth. The proposal garnered first place among grant applications from the Philippines, and was adjudged second best in Asia among other proposal submissions from Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

The first e-lab opened in Don Bosco Makati. The 2003 grant was used for the building of more e-labs in Don Bosco affiliates in Tondo, Nueva Ecija, Naga, Legazpi, and Pampanga and for hardware acquisitions for these labs. Since then, opportunities have steadily knocked on the doors of its students luring them to greener pastures both here and abroad.

"With our 2004 grant," Bro. Joe Ferrer, technical director of Don Bosco Technical College explained, "We will expand this e-learning project outside the Don Bosco system. We will allot a certain number of institutions from each region including Mindanao."

Last year, the e-learning modules employed in the first e-lab in Don Bosco Makati were converted into CD format. For this year, Bro. Joe hopes that they will be able to convert their learning modules from CD to online format.

For its part, the Altiora Quaero Foundation Inc in Negros Occidental has "Farm It", or "Juvenile Undertakings in Sustainable Farming through Alternative Resource Management and Information Technology" or "Project Just Farm IT." It will rely on the potency of agriculture in long-term economic development. In particular, the endeavor seeks to build a training center and demonstration farm in rural areas that will make techno-savvy agri-entrepreneurs out of OSYs in those regions. This will be implemented through a combination of IT materials and hands-on apprenticeship in small-scale, high-value agriculture.

According to Roberto A. Alaban Jr, executive director of the foundation, the grant will fund the renovation of the classrooms, purchase of computers for the training center, and will be used as start-up funds for the farm.

"After their training, we will organize the students into cooperatives and we will aid them in the marketing of their agricultural products," he said. "We are committed to look after them even after the training."

This year saw a total of 300 applications from Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, and the Philippines. Out of the 300, only 31 projects received the nod of the national judging panels. These 31 projects had been reviewed and analyzed by a regional judging panel to handpick the 2004 recipients of the grant.

AMBASSADOR Preciosa Soliven and Samsung president and CEO with representatives from Don Bosco and Altiora Quaero Foundation

Unesco Ambassador Preciosa Soliven served as one of the regional judges for the 2004 DigitAll Hope Awards. The special guest at the awarding ceremony held at the Don Bosco Mandaluyong auditorium praised all the applicants for the grant. "Overall, I can see that the use of technology by the youth is speeding up our journey toward a knowledge-based society," Soliven revealed.

Another special guest was National Youth Commission Chair Paolo Benigno Aquino III who served in the national judging panel. "Funding is always a problem when it comes to projects like this," he remarked. "But Samsung DigitAll Hope Award will ease this problem and hopefully, more youth-centered projects will be set up in the coming years."

Bro. Joe Ferrer SDB together with Bro. Jun Inocencio SDB, superintendent of Don Bosco School and Training Center, received the grant for the Salesians of St. John Bosco. Meanwhile, executive director Roberto A. Alaban Jr and treasurer Rene Talde received the grant for the Altiora Quaero.

A total of $600,000 in funds was given to 15 organizations in the region last year. Of this, a $45,000 grant was earmarked for the Don Bosco Center for Research and Training's Samsung e-lab proposal.

For this year, Samsung raised its total funds by $100,000 due to the winning projects' great promise of helping the youth and contributing to social and economic development. In its two years of existence, Samsung DigitAll Hope has awarded a total of $1.15 million in grants

As Samsung Electronics Philippines Corporation President and CEO Sang Youl Eom said in his speech during the awarding ceremony, "By bridging this digital divide, technology will surely make Filipino youth more competitive and lead the country to social and economic prosperity."

Samsung has invited key individuals to form independent judging committees on a national and regional basis to evaluate submissions. This year's regional panel includes Ambassador Preciosa Soliven of Unesco-Philippines, Dr Vivian Balakrishnan, Minister of Sate, Ministry of National Development and Ministry of Trade and Industry for Singapore; Dr. Pairash Thajchayapong, president of the National Science and Technology Development Agency of Thailand and Dr. H. Arief Rachman, executive chairperson of the Indonesian Counsel for Unesco.

THE MANDALUYONG Boys Choir

SAMSUNG
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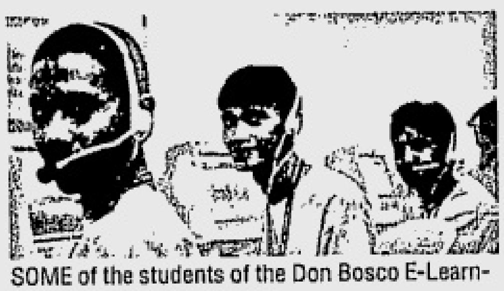
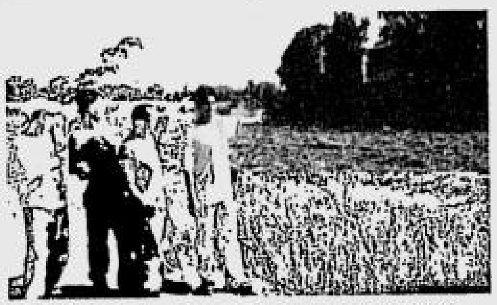
SAMSUNG president and CEO Sang Youl Eom


SOME of the students of the Don Bosco E-Learning Center in Mandaluyong


ALTIORA Quaero Foundation students at Victoria's Farm overlooking a site where a greenhouse will be developed

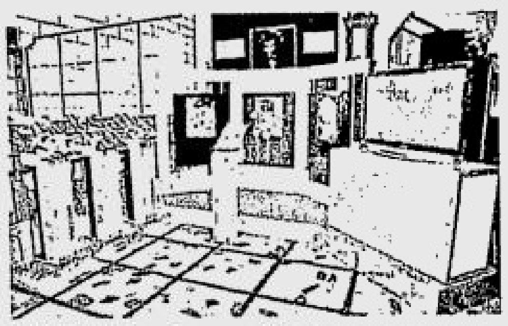


EXHIBIT of the winners of the 'My DigitAll Hope' poster-making contest

ALTIORA Quaero Foundation students

An ExclusiV3 Engagement

Discover, appreciate and rave about Motorola V3

That's what guests did at the recent unveiling of Motorola V3 during the Mobile Alchemy, an intimate gathering of Globe Platinum Club members sponsored by Motorola.

One McKinley Place's The Edge illuminated in the glow of flash bulbs from the paparazzi as the Hub Trons (Ivarluski Aseron-clad, tech-savvy spokesmodels) disembark from the latest Jaguar XJ. Behind the velvet rope, guests were ushered in to Aliyah Parcs' mellow serenade. This is complimented by the soothing interior and glass sculptures, setting the tone for the elegant affair.

The event, which showcased various forms of mobile cravings had the Hub Trons stride the red carpet with the Motorola V3-Globe Platinum tandem on their hands. They enticed the crowd to check out how a mobile phone so thin can deliver sophisticated technology.

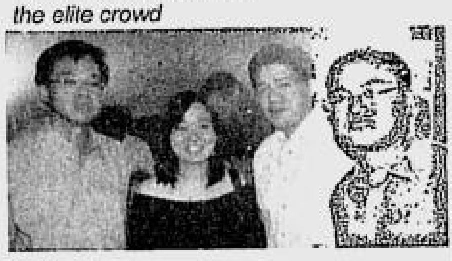
Motorola's new V3 is the essence of advanced engineering and superlative design. Just 13. 9 mm thin, it can rival the width of an average credit card. Although one of the slimmest phones in the market, it is rich in function, performance excellence and superior design innovation. A quad-band embedded with Bluetooth, VGA camera, 2.2 hi-resolution screen with up to 262K colors and stylish metallic finishes, it is the ultimate, beautiful slim-phone.

VIPs who were Globe-Platinum members and Jaguar All-Aluminum XJ car owners were even more indulged as Arlene Aran Amarante, Motorola Philippines Personal Communications Sector country manager presented each one their own Motorola V3 units.

For them the phone is much desired. With an aircraft grade aluminum-cast magnesium finish, it's a gorgeous companion to any occasion, in every part of the world. The precision cut metal keypad is sleek and sensitive to the softest touch. And they don't need to open this mobile to voice-dial, capture images and know who's calling. A slender sensation, it slips easily on the pocket and makes plenty of room in the purse. A prized catch for an awed bunch.

Aliyah Parcs serenades the elite crowd

Luigi Bernas, Gerry Ablaza, Raya Roa-Gonzalez and Leah de Guzman


Edward Tan, Joleen Joyce Lim, Edward Tan and John Sy

Aoki Tokuhura and Ferdz Dela Cruz

Oscar Reyes, Arlene Amarante and Anton Huang

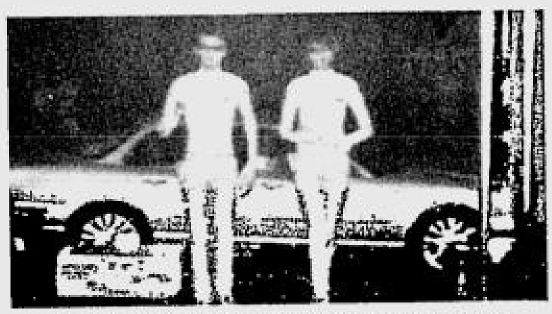
Pinky Webb plays host for the night

Donna Amores, DJ Franchesca, Arlene Amarante, and Mari Litonjua

Gretchen Barretto receives Motorola V3 from Motorola's PCS country manager Arlene Amarante and Globe's president and CEO, Gerry Ablaza.

Globes Gerry Ablaza, Dianne Gonzalez, Lizanne Uyachaco and Joe Fisher

THE NEW MOTOROLA
RAZR V3


Models strike a pose with Motorola V3 and Globe dual-line optiSIM excel

Motorola's Arlene Amarante and MTV Corporate Director Rod Nepumuceno

Arlene Cu, Vickie Tan-Yao, Lizanne Uychaco and Ernest Cu

Motorola V3 and Globe dual-line optiSIM excel is a perfect combination

Gawad Galing Pook 2004

A
and Excellence

(The photographs above were taken during the awards ceremony held in Malacañan Palace on December 17, 2004. Hon. Noli de Castro, Vice President of the Republic of the Philippines, conferred the awards.)

MESSAGE

This is a day for celebration!

We celebrate the success of local governments in defining what is meant by good public service, in establishing standards for efficiency, and in proving that no problem can be daunting before a community that works as a team.

We need outstanding programs to show us that love of country is alive in many communities all over the Philippines. They provide us with hope and inspiration. They help dispel the gloom that comes with stories of corruption and mismanagement.

For the past eleven years, Galing Pook Awards Foundation has dedicated itself towards the search and recognition of programs that demonstrate excellence and innovation in local governance. Members and partners willingly carry out the programs of the Foundation without compensation. We passionately share the mission of encouraging local governments who serve their constituents well. We look forward to the day when Galing Pook winners could influence a great number of their peers towards a culture of excellence.

We dedicate ourselves to meet the following challenges in the coming years:

- Organizing data on Galing Pook winners beyond anecdotes and stories. We would like to prove that Galing Pook communities are also winners in reducing poverty incidence, improving the quality of life, and managing public finance. We also want to prove that leaders who serve the people well have excellent chances of being re-elected.
- Developing a critical mass of local leaders who can mentor and inspire their peers beyond workshops and conferences.
- Generating greater awareness, respect and support for outstanding local governments. We would like to influence the corporate sector and international institutions to take a second hard look at local governments in the Philippines as effective agents of change and reforms.
- Walking hand-in-hand with other communities who are genuinely interested and are ready to replicate outstanding programs on governance, environmental management, food sufficiency, health, and education.
- Discovering and implementing non-traditional ways of discovering programs and communities that empower themselves to rise beyond problems of poverty and paternalistic leadership.

Our passion is to help make all our communities a place where laws work, where air, rivers, and streets are clean, where all elementary children have access to quality education, and where every citizens is treated with respect instead of patronage.

MILWIDA M. GUEVARA
Chairman, Board of Trustees, Galing Pook Foundation

TOP TEN OUTSTANDING LOCAL GOVERNME

THE *i*-GOVERNANCE PROGRAM — *NAGA CITY*

The program is a computer-based system of delivering public services. Comprehensiv
city government policies, programs and operations are posted on the website. Nagueñ
www.naga.gov.ph, where they can access such information as prices of medicines pur
School Board budget and the latest ordinances. Any citizen can thus monitor practical

MINI-HYDROELECTRIC POWER PLANT — *BARANGAY UPPER BANTAWON, HINUNAN*

The armed conflict between government forces and communist rebels turned Upper B
Southern Leyte into a no-man's island. The 68 families which comprised the communi
27 families returned. They thought of providing electricity to every household. With th
they bought a water turbine. Barangay residents constructed a 110-meter dike that con
With determination and great vision, their dream turned into reality.

COASTAL ZONING PROJECT: DELINEATING COASTAL WATERS FOR COMMERCIAL & MARGINAL FISHERFOLKS — *CALBAYOG CITY*

Calbayog City faced the problem of about a thousand commercial fishers unfairly com
even if there is a law banning commercial fishing in municipal waters. The program w
sea-borne patrol operations with an effective communication network; (ii) lessen the o
illegal fishing in the area; and (iii) increase fish catch and income of marginal fisherfol

BOHOL ECOTOURISM DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM — *BOHOL PROVINCE*

The program aims to put in place tourism promotion mechanisms that are environme
viable and socially equitable. This strategy is geared towards accelerating developme
communities, especially the poor and marginalized sectors. The program provides for
cultural sites to ensure long-term sustainability and to spread the benefits of tourism t
generation and poverty alleviation.

LA UNION MEDICAL CENTER — *LA UNION PROVINCE*

With funding support from the European Union, the Provincial Government of La Un
bed medical center and transformed it into a viable Economic Enterprise offering not j
long-term sustainability.

VIGAN HERITAGE CONSERVATION PROGRAM: A TOOL FOR DEVELOPMENT — *VIG*

The program is based on a Master Plan that aims not only to revitalize the historic cen
the socio-economic aspects such as human development, community organization, ed
for sustainable development.

BARANGAY AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER (BADC) — *PROVINCE OF NE*

BADC provides a venue for client-focused convergence of government resources and
Provincial Government. With people empowerment as the guiding principle, BADC p
(i) address the needs of people situated in the hinterlands, (ii) effectively respond to th
long-festering insurgency, and (iii) provide agriculture-led government services. The p
involves social preparation of upland communities to enable them to analyze their co
solutions, and participate in development activities.

TRI-PEOPLE WAY OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION —*UPI, MAGUINDANAO*

The municipality of Upi is composed of three communities: Tedurays, Christians, and
conflicts and disagreements within tribes, the Tedurays settle them before their Kefed
Muslims before their Kokoman, and the Christians before the Katarungang Pambaran
conflict, however, such could not be practiced because of cultural biases or difference
Council, however, a more objective body is able to resolve conflicts more effectively. T
(composed of 2 elders each from the Tedurays, Christians and Muslims) jointly develo
that would guide them in settling cross-tribe cases.

MAINSTREAMING GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT — *DAVAO CITY*

The LGU of Davao City, with the help of activist gender movement in the city, has ma
development in many aspects of local governance. This includes the following: GAD
Development Code, creation of the Integrated Gender and Development Division (IGI
sensitivity trainings and policy planning, and formulation of Women's Agenda throu
that involves barangay women's organizations and other sectoral organizations. Gend
done in research and data banking through collation of sex-disaggregated data that ar
gender-responsive program planning.

REINVENTING THE NAGA SCHOOL BOARD — *NAGA CITY*

Key to the program is the empowerment of the Local School Board by building a stron
local level. In the reinvented school board, the organizational structure has been chan
good governance: transparency, accountability, participation, and predictability. The p
development, facilitate professional teacher development, increase community involv
stakeholdership.

GALING POOK FOUNDATION was established to institutionalize the Gan
Galing Pook). Its mission is to search and recognize outstanding program
to assist in building the capacity of local government units through disse
LGU programs and facilitating replication through the creation of learn
sources for policy agenda or reforms, theory/concept/model building on loca
of learning among LGUs. Galing Pook Foundation acts as resource institut
and best practices. And equally important, its task is to mobilize resource
Pook Foundation and its other programs.

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12 TRAILBLAZING PROGRAMS

THE INTEGRATED DISASTER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM – *DUMANGAS, ILOILO*

In 1997, twin disasters visited Dumangas: floods ravaged the first crop, and drought devastated the second crop, resulting in disease outbreaks, loss of livelihood, and food shortages. In response, the local government reorganized the Municipal Disaster Coordinating Council (MDCC) in August 1998 and established a disaster coordinating council in every barangay. Participation of local communities in disaster preparedness and response has resulted in more effective local disaster management.

ANG BAGONG ANYO NG BUHAY OR BANYUHAY PROGRAM – *BULACAN PROVINCE*

Banyuhay is a reform program in the provincial jail. It is a response to the traditional jail management system's failure to perform its mandate of developing and enforcing an effective system of providing jail and security services. The Provincial jail system of Bulacan now stands as an example of efficient and humane jail management.

PRESERVING HERITAGE FOR PROGRESS – *SAN FERNANDO CITY, PAMPANGA*

It is a program of Urban Renewal through Heritage Conservation and Cultural Revival. It aims to save the heart and soul of the city--its rich history and heritage. Implementation is based on a masterplan for large-scale restoration projects and cultural activities and competitions. The program is backed by intensive research and executive orders and ordinances to enforce its implementation.

ZERO POVERTY 2000 - *CONCEPCION, ILOILO*

This is a vision-driven and convergent anti-poverty program. The municipality of Concepcion devised a convergence strategy to rally all departments to integrate their different programs into a united effort against poverty. The LGU works towards becoming a competent and dynamic local government serving as agent of change and for people's economic empowerment in partnership with civil society. The municipality's goal is zero poverty by year 2020.

FUNCTIONAL LITERACY TOWARDS SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROWTH - *M'LANG, NORTH COTABATO*

High illiteracy has relegated the Indigenous Peoples of M'lang to menial (and seasonal) jobs. The LGU recognizes that the best way to empower the IPs is through education. But addressing the literacy problem is not enough to uplift the standard of living of the IPs. Thus, the Functional Literacy Program, serves as an entry point for implementing a more integrated approach to facilitate the IPs' access to opportunities such as education, health, housing, and livelihood.

SUSTAINABLE INTEGRATED AREA DEVELOPMENT (SIAD): THE NEW CORELLA EXPERIENCE - *NEW CORELLA, DAVAO DEL NORTE*

The SIAD features the LGU as area manager integrating a wide range of interventions in a defined geographical area for holistic development. Innovations in the program include: deployment of Local Community Organizers; creation of Barangay Monitoring Teams in 20 barangays; expansion of membership in Local School Boards; bottoms-up planning involving all families at the purok level and participatory planning and budgeting at the barangay level; conduct of "Tabo (market day) sa Barangay"; creation of multi-sectoral People's Congress and Coalition of All Sustainable Agriculture practitioners; and establishment of local health care and various livelihood financial schemes.

ANTIQUE INTEGRATED AREA DEVELOPMENT (ANIAD) PROGRAM – *PROVINCE OF ANTIQUE*

ANIAD is a community-based program that aims to reduce poverty, contribute to people empowerment, and help ensure the viability of biophysical and human resources. The program is based on a defined spatial framework aimed at balancing assistance to coastal, lowland and upland communities.

DAGWAY SIGMAHANON — *SIGMA, CAPIZ*

The program is anchored on the establishment of a theater group called *Dagway Sigmahanon, Inc.* to serve as an effective instrument for social transformation and community involvement. The program promotes social consciousness, develops creative and responsive individuals, develops and enhances the artistic capabilities and organizational skills of young people, and establishes linkages with school and community-based theater groups. Young people are saved from juvenile delinquency through the dynamics of theater by integrating values and spiritual formation.

TOTAL HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM —*OPOL, MISAMIS ORIENTAL*

Whereas HR traditionally refers to members of an organization, Opol has redefined it to include all citizens of the municipality. Thus, the LGU builds the capabilities of the people through the E4—Education, Environment, Economic Enhancement, and Empowerment of the People—the "pillars" of program implementation.

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP IN TOURISM DEVELOPMENT —*PROVINCE OF GUIMARAS*

The Program is a collaboration between the Guimaras provincial government and the tour and transport operators, producers, and local communities. It facilitates the development of the tourism industry in a participatory approach to increase tourist arrivals and receipts, thereby contributing to poverty reduction.

PROJECT JOSIE (JOINT SYSTEMS IMPROVEMENT IN EDUCATION PROJECT) —*BULACAN PROVINCE*

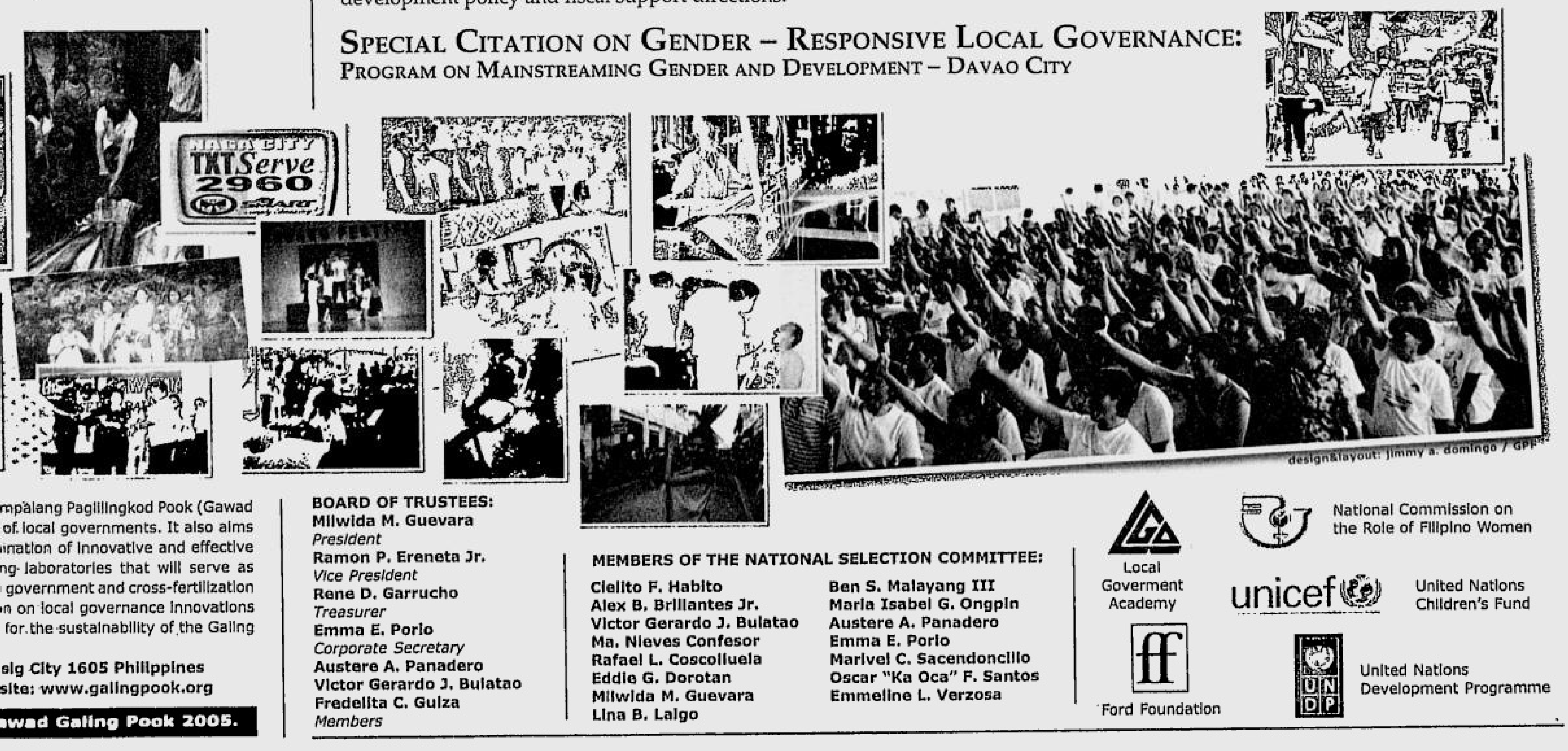
Project JOSIE is a participatory process of continuous educational improvement through: teacher training in English and Mathematics, development of instructional materials, regular evaluation of students and teachers' performance, organization of community volunteers, and summer institute for students in arts and enrichment programs. The program is based on a comprehensive and systemic model that engages all education stakeholders in project management and evaluation.

WOMEN ORGANIZING AND EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM —*COMPOSTELA VALLEY PROVINCE*

As a strategy for poverty reduction, the Compostela Valley provincial government organized different sectors to become active partners in governance. One such sectors is the women, who were organized into the Compostela Valley Provincial Council of Women. The council (now composed of 60,000 card-bearing members) is consulted and involved in formulating the province's development policy and fiscal support directions.

SPECIAL CITATION ON GENDER – RESPONSIVE LOCAL GOVERNANCE:

PROGRAM ON MAINSTREAMING GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT – DAVAO CITY



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MALE MASSAGE PINK 374-8480

MASSAGE 8545348 WARREN

MR. UNIVERSE SPA Tel. No. 410-1259

★ Mr BODY PHYSIQUE ★ 11A Kamias QC 4350978

RELAXING MASSAGE 8978214

THAI Msge Llc 0921-7569278

REFLEXOLOGY

Facial / Massage Olc 534-4003

BODYLAX 4144488

★FEELS GOOD 4127758★

I-spa Ctland 9 Mkt 8160151

•Wizard Massage 4213197•

TUTORIAL LESSONS

LIGHT 5268216 / 5301315

MISCELLANEOUS

AIRCON SERVICES 09192963311

HOUSEHOLD

HOUSEHOLD JOBS

Good Maids Yaya Boy 7572089

Help Agency 532-1947 • 532-8503

NEED MAIDS 0915-5544777

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L-BAHAY 9206784 4540520

•CHEAP LBAHAY 9260424•

DirectMaid Yaya Mid-Vlle 9957034

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

HOUSE & LOT

MAKATI

3.5M Copernico St 09274584454

SHANG GRAND/SERENDRA Pre Selling 0918-9392979

MANILA

SAN ANDRES MANILA Bnew Twnhse/3stry/3br/3tb/grge P3.355M up 8903461 loc 34

MARIKINA

Bnew 4BR 3TB 2.6M 9487112

QUEZON CITY

•#131K-3rd Kamuning• 9210255 9219967 9220547

#9 14th St New Mla 1151m² Call Arnold Go 09177494499 or 9532616

BULACAN

GROTTO AREA 225T 9390299

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

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HOUSE & LOT

BULACAN

Meycauayan 2br 2tb 1cg P1.6M Bnew 0917-8550207

Near Grotto 650T 9372688

LAGUNA

BINAN RFO 400T 5201792

CONDO/TWNHSE

MAKATI

1.1M C5 Nr The Fort 10T/mo. or 4Yrs No Int. or 10% D.P. LIPAT AGAD 2-4BR 15min Fr Mktl 0917-8313226

NR LA SALLE TAFT Bnew /Twnhse/4sty/3br/3tb/mds rm 1-2 cr grge/deck P3.610M up 8903461

PASIG

1.6M ORTIGAS AVE. RESORT-TYPE, 1st Class 2-4BR P13T/ mo. or NoDP or 0% Bess • 0917-5234223

QUEZON CITY

BRAND NEW PROJECT 4 2STOREY W/ ATTIC 6830677

LOT

RIZAL

RICHMOND nr Ortigas Ext COMML 200m² Ph1 P6T/m² RESD'L 164m² P5T/m² w/view RUSH 9338423 / 6356003

CAVITE

MEADOWOOD EXEC VILL LA 220m² P1.2M neg call MERZ 7785470 / 0917-8409951

VARIED AREAS

LPL Manor Salcedo Vill 40 sqm P2.8M negotiable CTland 8 studio P1.2M Bonaventure 65sqm P3M Las Piñas 2sty w/ warehse P3.6M neg'ble 8509507

REAL ESTATE FOR RENT

HOUSE

MANILA

PANDACAN NR CALTEX 15T ;2TB; 2GRGE CALL 046-5735520

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

CONDO/TWNHSE

CAVITE

COMML/RESDL

MAKATI

REAL ESTATE FOR RENT

WAREHOUSE/ FACTORY

Cubao fabshp 500m² 7257342

ROOM & BOARD

Chin Gen Area 7836781

•FURNISH PASAY 8872865•

P200! Sucat Pque 8275345

BEDSPACE

Mkti nr Ayala P1T Ldy 7257342

Nw studio Indy 3.5T 9137513

BUSINESS RENTAL

Dental Clinic For Sale/Lease Rm224 Atrium Bldg Makati •811-4071/823-6047•

RESORT LEASE/ RENT

Pansol Hot Spring priv 7767507

LOAN & MORTGAGE

2% W/O TAKING CAR 3677523/24

OFFICE SPACE FOR RENT

MALATE MLA 526-8048/49

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE OR RENT

HOUSE & LOT

Kapitolyo 5br 4tb 60T or 17M 0919-3220871 • 5344003

OTHER REAL ESTATE

REALTORS/SEMINAR

BROKERS CEP 4382966

TRANSPORTATION FOR SALE

CARS

BMW

'99 MB100 P300T 360-9523

PNOC ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION PNOC

Energy Center, Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila
Philippines MCPo Box 2102 Tel. No. 893-6001/1320

PHILIPPINE NATIONAL OIL COMPANY PRIVATIZATION OF PNOC ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

The Philippine National Oil Company (PNOC), through the PNOC-EDC Privatization Committee (PNOC-EDC PRIVACOM), has approved the privatization of PNOC Energy Development Corporation, a company engaged in the exploration, delineation, development, and exploration of economically viable geothermal resources.

PNOC-EDC PRIVACOM is now inviting prospective Financial Advisors to advise, guide and assist in the design, planning, preparation and implementation of the program for the privatization of PNOC-EDC.

Prospective financial advisors must meet all of the following criteria:

- Has experience as financial advisor to governments on privatization in the power sector, with transaction amounting to at least US$500 million
- Has track record in working with the Philippine Government (In particular DOF and BSP), its government owned and controlled corporations or its government financial institutions, either as an advisor for privatization or arranger bank for financing.
- Has established working relationship with PNOC, PNOC-EDC and other subsidiaries of PNOC, either as an advisor for privatization or arranger bank for financing
- Has experience in lead-managing public equity offerings and arranging equity sales, both globally and in Asia
- With representative office in the Philippines
- Has indicated availability and commitment to deploy in the country a dedicated team with experienced in power and geothermal energy

Qualified parties may secure eligibility forms during regular office hours from PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group- BAC Secretariat c/o B.F. Salvador from January 7, 2005 at 1st Floor, Building 5, PNOC Complex, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila. Deadline for submission of accomplished forms to the same office shall be on January 14, 2005 (Friday) at 12:00 noon. Eligible bidders shall then be notified by January 21, 2005.

For further inquiries, please contact the BAC Secretary, Mr. M. R. Rodriguez at telephone no. 893-1320 local 5420.

BAC Chairman

(PDI--Dec. 24 & 31, 2004)

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REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
KAGAWARAN NG EDUKASYON
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
DepEd Complex, Meralco Avenue,
Pasig City, Philippines

DepED
Telefax 631 9640
Direct Line 633 9342
Trunk Line 632 1361 local 2221/2007
E-mail Address jmluz@deped.gov.ph
Website http//www.deped.gov.ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Department of Education through the National Education Testing and Research Center (NETRC) is inviting all security printers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following packages/lots:

PACKAGE	DESCRIPTION	APPROVED BUDGET
1	• Printing & Packaging of 2005 NAT Test Booklets for Grade 6 and Year IV • Delivery of Test Booklets, Answer Sheets and Non-Classified Materials • Retrieval of Test Booklets and Answer Sheets	P 16,420,000.00
2	• Printing, Packaging of 2005 National Achievement Test (NAT) Test Booklets for Year 1 (for Regular and Bridge) • Delivery of Test Booklets, Answer Sheets and Non-Classified Materials • Retrieval of Test Booklets and Answer Sheets	P 9,587,000.00
3	• Printing, Packaging of Reading Test in English and Filipino Test Booklets for Grade II • Delivery of Test Booklets, Answer Sheets and Non-Classified Materials • Retrieval of Test Booklets and Answer Sheets	P 2,600,000.00
4	• Printing of 2005 National Achievement Test & Reading Test Non-Classified Materials for Grade VI, Year I (Regular and Bridge, III & IV (NAT) and Grade II (Reading Test)	P 1,450,000.00

All interested printers may avail of the bidding documents upon submission of a Letter of Intent and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Two Thousand Pesos (P2,000.00) starting December 20, 2004 - January 14, 2005 at the BAC Secretariat Office, Rm. 112-A, Mabini Bldg., DepEd Complex, Pasig City or visit the DepEd Website at http://www.deped.gov.ph. A pre-bid conference will be held on January 6, 2005, 10:00 a.m. at Bulwagan ng Karunungan, Rizal Bldg. 1, DepEd Complex, Pasig City. The deadline for the submission and opening of bids shall be on January 20, 2005 at the same time and place mentioned above.

DepEd-BAC reserves the right to reject any or all bids to waive deficiencies embodied therein without assuming any obligation whatsoever to offset expenses or losses the bidder may incur in the preparation of the bids. DepEd-BAC further reserves the right to declare a failure of bid, or not award the contract, and makes no assurance that a contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation.

(Sgd.) JUAN MIGUEL M. LUZ
Undersecretary
Chairman, DepEd-BAC

(PDI - Dec. 18 & 24, 2004)

TRANSPORTATION FOR SALE

CARS

HYUNDAI

'96 GRACE P195T 360-9523

'98 H100 P230T 360-9523

KIA

'98 BESTA P240T 360-9523

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CARS FOR RENT

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CarsVans CoasterBus 422-9296

CARS•VANS•BRDAL 8069956

CARS VANS 4X4 COSTR BUS AUTOMATIC/MANUAL TRANS 8908667 8908668 8908669

P800/L3 9136710 / 4333682

REVO w/driver 9272821

VAN 4 HIRE 9298376

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CAR LOAN

1.5% Fast Car Loan 3677523/24

1.5% CAR LOAN 534-4441

1.5% CARLOAN 373-6519

1.5% CARLOAN 788-0361

1.5% Easy Car Loan 3748765

1.5% Easy Car Loan 4112547/48

1.5% Easy Carloan 7816352/55

1.5% Fast Car Loan 6560140

TRANSPORTATION FOR RENT

CAR LOAN

1.5% w/oTaking Car 3650974/75

1.5% w/oTaking Car 7228942-43

2% w/o Taking Car 7262780

2% w/o Taking Car 5315577

2% w/o taking car 7880183-84

2% w/oTaking Car 8870490/95

2% w/oTaking Car 8966630/33

2% w/oTaking Car 8959454

2% w/oTaking Car 3732081

2% w/oTaking Car 7221021

2% w/out taking car 6567665

GENERAL ITEMS FOR SALE

BUY/SELL

College Plans 0917-7939632

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

YAMAHA GRAND & UPRIGHT ELITE PIANO CENTER Almost New:TERMS-7213124

PETS

LABRADOR PUPS P8T Neg. • 0917-5780465

WANTED TO BUY

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GENERAL ITEMS FOR SALE

WANTED TO BUY

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MISCELLANEOUS

Indt'l Leather Gloves & Apron 4 Sale 0917-8550207

PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of ADELAIDA E. PASAMBA consisting of cash deposited at UCPB Savings Account at Tanay, Rizal has been settled extrajudicially by her heirs, as per Doc No. 532, Page No. 95, Book No. XXII, Series of 2004 of Notary Public Rufino P. Quintiong of Rizal Province.
PDI-Dec 24, 31 & Jan 7, 2004

𝔓𝔥𝔦𝔩𝔦𝔭𝔭𝔦𝔫𝔢 𝔗𝔬𝔲𝔯𝔦𝔰𝔪 𝔄𝔲𝔱𝔥𝔬𝔯𝔦𝔱𝔶
MANILA

NOTICE TO OUR VALUED TRAVEL TAX CLIENTS

In consonance with MC #81 issued by the President on **December 14, 2004**, official time at the Main Office is from 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. until **January 6, 2005. "No noon break"** policy is still observed on travel tax processing.

Travel Tax offices are closed on the holidays (December 24 to 27; 30-31; January 1 and 2) except Travel Tax counters at NAIA terminals 1 and 2 (tel. nos. 8796038 and 8795160, respectively), which are open daily from the early morning up to the last evening flights.

Airport counters at Mactan, Davao, Subic and Laoag International Airports are manned on days when there are outgoing international flights.

(Sgd.) **ROBERT DEAN S. BARBERS**
General Manager & CEO

(PDI - Dec. 24, 2004)

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

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RETIRE 2YRS 09189051567

NOTICE OF DISSOLUTION

Notice is hereby given that the Amended Articles of Incorporation of ACM PLASTIC PHILIPPINES CORP. shortening the term of its existence up to September 30, 2004 thereby dissolving the said corporation on said date have been approved by its Board of Directors.

All persons having claims against said corporation is requested to present same at Lot 7 Block 31 Kiel St., Mercedes Village, Cainta, Rizal.

This announcement will serve as notice to all concerned of the legal dissolution of the aforesaid corporation.

(Sgd) RAMIL L. LOPEZ

(PDI - Dec. 17, 24 & 31, 2004)

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

RTW Wholesaler 3738821

SALE/LEASE RESTAURANT Loc. in Dapitan St. infront UST, Good Location Good Furnitures & Equipment Nancy 731-3402 0917-2067392

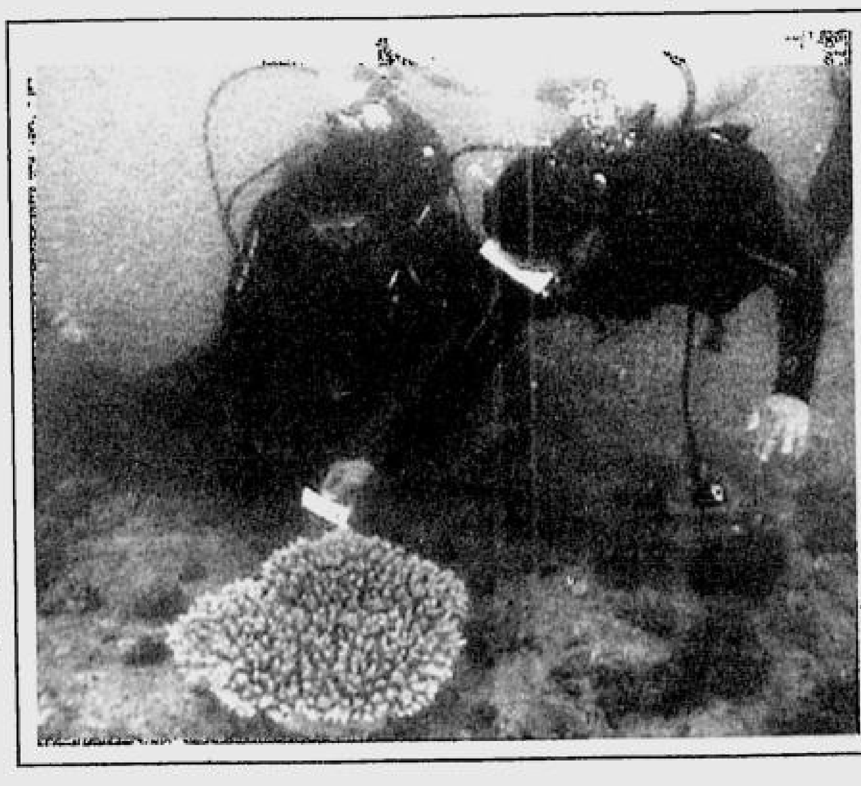
EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

FEMALE

NEED YAYA MIDWIFE W/REFERENCES CALL 7500000 7504000

MALE/FEMALE

URGENT: LAWYER 09224385984 OR 8237873 BEN.



TRANSCO LEADS CORAL TRANSPLANTATION IN CEBU

TransCo president and CEO Dr. Alan T. Ortiz recently led a multiparty effort to transplant corals traversed by the transmission firm's Leyte-Cebu Interconnection Uprating Project (LCIUP). The symbolic coral transplantation program was held in Brgy. Talisay, Daanbantayan, Cebu. The P2-billion LCIUP, slated for completion by September 2005, entails the installation of 32 kilometers of submarine cable from Tongonan, Leyte to Barangay Talisay in Daanbantayan. This uprating project will effectively double the LCIUP's capacity to 400MW from the current 200MW and bring much needed power supply to the island of Cebu. Aside from the coral transplantation activity, TransCo and LCIUP contractor Kanematsu also turned over to local government officials P200,000 as livelihood assistance to fishermen in Barangays Maya and Talisay.

Manila Memorial Park
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"Maluwalhati pong tinawag na
ng Dakilang Maykapal
ang aming Tatay
upang siya ay makapiling ni Nanay
sa buhay na walang hanggan ... "

HERMINIGILDO TINIO CALMA

Isinilang sa bayan ng Arayat, Pampanga / 21 Pebrero 1914
Naniralan at naglingkod sa bayan ng
Heneral Tinio, Nueva Ecija
Yumao sa Lungsod Quezon / 21 Disyembre 2004

Ulirang kabiyak ni **Efigenia Maducdoc Calma** (†)
Mabuting ama nina **Onching & Thelma,**
Mimi & Sal Umana,
Flavio & Velma, Cita & Teddy Bautista at **Peter Boy**..

Minahal na "**Tatay**" ng kanyang mga apong sina
Ronald & Tonette, Erick at **Therese**
Cathy, Carol, Gigi at **Tiffy**
Gippy, Cippy at **Val**
Lloyd & Marj, Leslie at **Lester**
Sarah at **Sheryl**

Nilambing ng mga apo sa tuhod na sina
Martie, Lander, Inigo, Migs, Alyana at **Lucas**

Itinuring na magulang nina
Moding & Erning Carino at **Elaine & Alex Dometilla**

Ang kanyang mga labi ay nakahimlay at mananatili
sa Arlington Memorial Chapels (Araneta Avenue)
hanggang ika-lima ng umaga, 25 Disyembre 2004.
Pagkatapos siya ay ililipat sa
kanyang tahanan sa bayan ng Heneral Tinio, Nueva Ecija.
Ang kanyang katawang-lupa ay ihahatid
sa huling hantungan,
ganap na ika-dalawa ng hapon, 26 Disyembre 2004,
sa libingan ng pamilya.

"I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."

John 14:6

In Loving Memory

on the Eleventh Death Anniversary of

DOÑA JUANA VILLARICA MARTEL

January 27, 1898 – December 25, 1993

Masses will be offered for her **tomorrow, December 25, 2004**
at the following churches:

MARY THE QUEEN PARISH *Madison St., Greenhills, San Juan*	6:00 A.M.
REDEMPTORIST CHURCH *Baclaran, Parañaque City*	6:00 A.M.
MINOR BASILICA OF THE BLACK NAZARENE *Quiapo, Manila*	6:00 A.M.
SANCTUARIO DE SAN JOSE *Greenhills, Mandaluyong City*	6:15 A.M.
SHRINE OF MARY QUEEN OF PEACE *Our Lady of EDSA, Quezon City*	6:30 A.M.
MT. CARMEL SHRINE *Doña J. Rodriguez St., New Manila, Quezon City*	8:00 A.M.
CHRIST THE KING PARISH *Green Meadows Avenue, Quezon City*	8:30 A.M.
ST. ALPHONSUS MARY DE LIGUORI CHURCH *Magallanes Village, Makati City*	11:00 A.M.
NATIONAL SHRINE OF THE MOST HOLY ROSARY *Sto. Domingo, Quezon City*	12:00 N.N
SANCTUARIO DE SAN ANTONIO *McKinley Road, Forbes Park, Makati City*	4:30 P.M.
ST. JOHN BOSCO PARISH *A. Arnaiz Ave.-Cor. Amorsolo St., Makati City*	4:30 P.M.
ST. ANDREW THE APOSTLE PARISH *Kalayaan Avenue, Bel-Air II, Makati City*	5:00 P.M.
ST. FRANCIS PARISH CHURCH *Shaw Boulevard, Mandaluyong City*	5:30 P.M.
HARRISON PLAZA CHAPEL *2/F, Harrison Plaza Shopping City, Malate, Manila*	5:00 P.M. and 6:00 P.M.

Her children,

ENRIQUE
ANTONIO, JR. & BELEN LOVINA TICZON
JOSE & OLGA SEVERINO
CARLOS & ETELKA JUNGSCHLAGER
RODOLFO & ALITA ROMUALDEZ
RICARDO

Her Sister, ISABEL V. RAMOS
Nephews, Nieces, Grandchildren & Great Grandchildren request all pious readers to join them in prayer for the eternal repose of her soul.

An obituary with
a picture can be
a fitting tribute to
your departed loved one.

Always caring... **INQUIRER OBITUARIES**

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:
❶ Copy of Death Certificate;
❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

DEATH ANNOUNCEMENT • MESSAGE OF THANKS •
DEATH ANNIVERSARY • REQUIEMS •
FREE OBIT DESIGN

REST IN PEACE

The Oppen Family thanks all the relatives and friends for their condolences, prayers and generosity on the passing away of

Margarita "Nuning"
Cuyugan Oppen

January 26, 1912 – December 1, 2004

In our hearts she lives forever.

For your Classified Ads requirements, call our Classifieds Advertising Hotlines:

HEAD OFFICE : 897-8808 loc. 514, 516; 899-4425; 897-2535; 897-8425 **(Telefax)** • CUBAO : 912-9008 **to** 11 **(Aurora)**
MAKATI : 892-5578; 811-4361; 811-4370 • KALAW : 528-0213; 527-3342 • MEGAMALL : 635-0219; 635-0220

Rudy H. Samson

Peacefully joined his Creator
on 22 December 2004 at the age of 75.

His loving wife **Buda**, children **Arie** (†), **Manny** and **Camille**, **Timmy** and **Patty**, **Tina** and **Luis**, **Rina**, **Alex**, together with his grandchildren, **Tommy**, **Sarina**, **Addie**, **Andrea**, **Enzo**, **Joachim**, **Liana** and **Gabby**, his brothers and sister, relatives and friends deeply mourn his passing.

His remains lie in state at the Capilla del Señor, Santuario de San Antonio, McKinley Road, Forbes Park, Makati City.

Interment will be on Sunday, December 26, 2004 at the Santuario de San Antonio after the 2:00 p.m. Mass at the Capilla del Señor.

ATTY. ANTONIO M. PERY

Died in the Grace of our Lord
on December 22, 2004 at the age of 73.

His loving wife, **Fe De la Cruz Pery**; children **Ma. Angela Buchanan**, **Jose Antonio**, **John Anthony**, and **Paul Anthony**; sister **Milagros**; son-in-law **William Joseph Buchanan**; grandchildren **Courtney Patricia Buchanan** and **Paige Sabrina Buchanan**; and **other** relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Christ the King Parish Mortuary at Greenmeadows, Quezon City.

Interment will be on December 29, 2004.

Our Memories of Auntie Gene
will always include everyone who
shared our sorrow when
she passed away.
Thank you for all the flowers, prayers,
and time you spent with us.

From the family of the late

Eugenia Banzon Jose

(February 21, 1911 – December 2, 2004)

"I have fought the good fight, I have stayed the course,
I have kept the faith." **St. Paul**

NORDY P. DIPLOMA & PARTNERS

and

LANGUAGES INTERNATIONALE

Mourn with immense sorrow the demise of
a dear friend and colleague

ATTY. FRANCISCO G. BANZON

6 June 1935 – 21 December 2004

He was a just man who gave everyone his or her due –
a faithful servant to his God, a dutiful husband to his wife,
a loving father to his children, and a caring person
to colleagues, friends, kith and kin.

HERE WAS A MAN
whose memory will always be cherished.

We express our most heartfelt condolences to his family and offer our prayers for the eternal repose of his immortal soul.

His remains lie in state at Rolling Hills Chapel, Bacolod City.

Interment: Dec. 30, 2004, 9:00 a.m.,
Bacolod Memorial Park

Our dearly beloved
Ched "Tita Darling"

DR. MERCEDES DE JESUS, MANAOIS, Phd.

Peacefully joined our Lord
on 22 December 2004 at the age of 80.

Her husband **Solomon C. Manaois Sr.**; her children **Solomon Jr.**, **Ruby** and **Florencio**; sister **Laura**; nephews & nieces, grandchildren, relatives and friends, request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Sta. Rita de Cascia Church, Baclaran Parish, Quirino Ave., Pasay City.

Interment will be on Sunday, 26 December 2004 at Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque after the 10:00 a.m. Mass.

We accept Classified advertisements
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in Luzon
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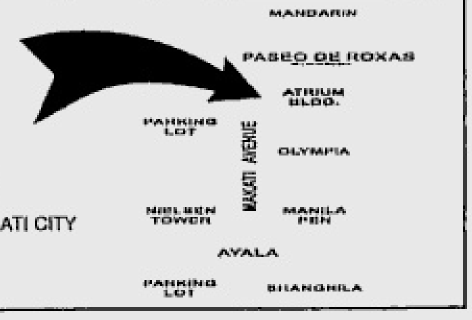

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CARLITO ORTIZ INTAL

Peacefully joined his Creator on December 21, 2004
at the age of 50.

His bereaved family, wife **Becky**; children **Carla**, **Aica**, **Bianca** and **Paulo**; sister **Susan**; brothers **Rolando**, **George** and **Reynaldo**; mother-in-law **Monette Prieto**; in-laws, relatives and friends request the pious reader to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at Chapel Venice in Loyola Memorial Chapels, Sucat, Parañaque. Interment will be at Manila Memorial Park, Dasmariñas, Cavite.

Interment date to be announced later.

ORLANDO D. CORPUS, SR.

Passed away in the Grace of our Lord
on December 23, 2004 at the age of 76.

A loving husband to **Julieta**; father to **Rolly, Rod, Chona, Mawi** and **Oc**; father-in-law to **Terry, Jack, Mike** and **Pamela.**

His body lies in state at La Funeraria Paz, G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Cremation will be on Sunday, December 26, 2004, 12:00 p.m. after the Mass at La Funeraria Paz Crematory.

With fondest memories of love, and the deepest sense of loss,
We mourn the passing of

Enrique Belo y Malaya

husband, father, grandfather, friend

at the age of 82, born on September 8, 1922
and called to the Lord's loving arms on December 23, 2004
living life to the fullest and leaving behind those who love him –

his widow, **Nena Gonzalez Belo**
his loving daughter **Vicki Belo**

his grandchildren **Quark** and **Cristalle Henares**, and their father **Atom Henares**

those considered part of his family -- **Joey Santos** and his sister-in-law **Matilde Belo**

and his partners and associates at **Belo, Gozon, Elma Law Offices.**

His remains will lie in state at the Santuario de San Antonio Church; Forbes Park, Makati between December 23 to December 26, 2004.

The funeral mass will be held on Sunday, December 26 at 10 a.m. in the same church.

His remains will be laid to rest in his crypt in the mortuary of the Forbes Park Church.

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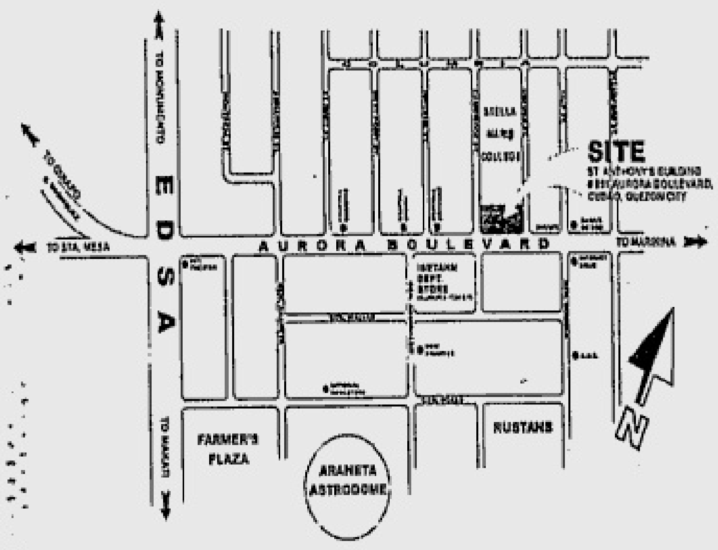

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"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life." John 3:16

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Republic of the Philippines
MARIANO MARCOS STATE UNIVERSITY
Batac 2906 Ilocos Norte

ANNOUNCEMENT

The President of Mariano Marcos State University was appointed Commissioner of the Commission on Higher Education effective 28 October 2004. The position was, therefore, declared vacant effective on the same day.

Accordingly, a Search Committee for the Presidency has been organized pursuant to the Implementing Rules and Regulations of Republic Act No. 8292.

Applicants must possess the minimum qualifications and must submit the required documents as follows:

Minimum Qualifications of Applicants

1. Filipino citizen
2. Holder of an earned doctoral degree
3. Preferably not more than sixty (60) years old at time of application
4. At least five (5) years of managerial experience
5. Recognized leadership in his/her profession in the academe or industry
6. Morally upright

Documents to be Submitted

1. Detailed Curriculum Vitaé and certified supporting documents
2. Proposed Vision, Mission and Trusts for the University
3. Clearances from NBI, Ombudsman, Sandigan Bayan, Civil Service Commission and previous employer
4. Full disclosure of all administrative, criminal and/or civil cases filed in any court in the Philippines
5. Results of Neuro-Psychiatric Examination to be accomplished by any government physician of an accredited health institution
6. Health Certificate from a government physician

All applications must be submitted in seven (7) copies to the Search Committee through the Secretariat on or before January 15, 2005.

Dr. Alegria T. Visaya
Acting Secretary, Board of Regents/SCP
Mariano Marcos State University
Batac 2906 Ilocos Norte
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(PDI–Dec. 15, 19 & 24, 2004)

REPUBLIKA NG PILIPINAS
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
KAGAWARAN NG EDUKASYON
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
DepEd Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

DepEd Procurement Service
December 17, 2004
IFB No. PISU-CO/332004

To : **All Eligible Supplier**

1. The Government of the Republic of the Philippines through the Department of Education (DepEd)-Third Elementary Education Project intends to apply the sum of **Two Million Eight Hundred Eighty Six Thousand Eight Hundred Forty Pesos (Php2,886,840.00) being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)** to payments under the contract for Printing and Delivery of NSBA 2005 Test Booklets. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.

2. The Department of Education-Third Elementary Education Project through the Bids and Awards Committee now invites sealed Bids from eligible Security Printers/Bidders for Printing and Delivery of NSBA 2005 Test booklets. The required number of test booklets are as follows:

Grade Level	Form A	Form B	Total
Grade 2	5,346	5,346	10,692
Grade 4	5,346	5,346	10,692
Grade 6	5,346	5,346	10,692
Grand Total	16,038	16,038	32,076

Delivery of the printed test booklets is at DepEd-Third Elementary Education Project (TEEP) Central Project Implementation Support Unit (CPISU). It is required that the **bidder should bid for all the total quantities.**

3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act No. 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act, and is restricted to organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, as speficied in Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the lowest calculated bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine his responsiveness to the technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.

4. Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from and secure the bidding documents at the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) with office address at 112-A Mabini Bldg., DepEd Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City, Tel. # (632) 636-6543 or 632-1361 local 2019, Fax # (632) 636-6542 starting **December 20, 2004**, or visit the DepEd website at http://www.deped.gov.ph.

5. A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased upon submission of a letter of intent to the above address and payment of a non-refundable fee of Two Thousand Five Hundred Pesos (Php2,500.00) to the Cashier's Office. The form of payment will either be in cash or by Cashier's/Manager's Check. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.

6. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the Bulwagan ng Karunungan, Rizal Building I, Department of Education, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City on or before 10:00 A.M. on **January 20, 2005** and must be accompanied by a security in the form of bank guarantee of not less than 1.5% of the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC), while if cash, cashier's or certified check or irrevocable letter of credit of not less than one percent (1%) of the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC). Late Bids shall not be accepted.

7. Bids will be opened in the presence of bidders' representatives who choose to attend at **2:00 P.M.** on **January 20, 2005**, at Bulwagan ng Karunungan, Rizal Building I, Department of Education, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City.

8. Prior to bid opening, a pre-bid conference will be held on **January 6, 2005, 2:00 p.m.** at the venue indicated in paragraph 7.

9. The DepEd BAC reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

(Sgd.) **JUAN MIGUEL M. LUZ**
Undersecretary and
BAC Chairman

(PDI–Dec. 18 & 24, 2004)

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Region XII
Province of Sultan Kudarat
Municipality of Isulan
Tel. # 064-201-3472; 064-201-3470; Fax No. 064-201-3526
e-mail mpdo@itech.com.ph

INVITATION FOR PREQUALIFICATION AND TO BID

Date: December 24, 2004
Contract No.: 003-004BJT
Loan No.: 1843-PHI

1. The Municipality of Isulan Sultan Kudarat Philippines has received a loan from the Asian Development Bank hereinafter referred to as ADB, thru the Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP) under the Mindanao Basic Urban Services Sector Project (MBUSSP) of the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) towards the cost of the Construction of Isulan Integrated Transport Terminal and intends to apply a portion of this loan to eligible payment under the Contract for which the Invitation for Pre-qualification and to Bids is issued.
2. The Municipality of Isulan, Sultan Kudarat, Philippines, hereinafter referred to as "the Employer," intends to pre-qualify contractors for the following works under this project.
   a) Architectural
   b) Structural
   c) Sanitary and Plumbing
   d) Electrical and Mechanical Works
   e) Site Development (Roads, Parking Space, Drainage System, etc.)
3. It is expected that the Invitation to Bid will be made on February 25, 2005.
4. Pre-qualification is open to firms and voluntary formed joint ventures from eligible member countries of ADB. (Applications may be made for pre-qualification for the above contract).
5. Eligible Applicants may obtain the Pre-qualification documents from BAC Chairman by calling Tel. No. 064-201-3472 / 064-201-3470 or by writing, faxing, or telexing *The Secretariat, Bids and Awards Committee, Office of the Municipal Planning and Development Office, Municipal Hall, Isulan, Sultan Kudarat, Philippines.*
6. The request must clearly state "Request for Pre-qualification for the Construction of Isulan Integrated Transport Terminal." The documents are available for a non-refundable fee of Three Thousand **Pesos** (Php 3,000.00) only, and to be paid to the Municipal Treasurer. The employer will promptly dispatch the documents by registered mail, but under no circumstances will it be held responsible for the late delivery or loss of the documents so mailed.
7. Submission of Application for pre-qualification must be received in sealed envelope, which must be delivered either by hand or by registered mail, to:

   The Secretariat
   Bids and Awards Committee
   Municipal Planning and Development Office
   Municipal Hall, Isulan, Sultan Kudarat, Philippines

   not later than: **1:00 o'clock in the afternoon of January 25, 2005 at BAC Secretariat/MPDO office** and be clearly marked **"Application to Pre-qualify for the construction of Isulan Integrated Transport Terminal."**
8. The Employer reserves the right to accept or reject late applications.
9. Applicants will be advised, in due course, of the results of their applications. Only firms and joint ventures pre-qualified under this procedure will be invited to bid.

(Sgd.) **MS. LALYN B. ESPINOSA**
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI – December 24, 2004)

'Symphonic colors' in PPO concert

THE PHILIPPINE Philharmonic Orchestra (PPO) welcomes the new year with pianist Aileen Chanco in a concert entitled "Symphonic Colors" on January 7, 2005, 8 p.m. at the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) Main Theater. Maestro Eugene Castillo conducts. Repertoire consists of the Philippine premiere of Sukhi Kang's "Dâlha für Orchester", Josef Suk's "Ein Märchen (Fairy Tale) Suite, op. 16", Aaron Copland's "Appalachian Spring" and John Adams' "Century Rolls." Aileen Chanco makes her second appearance in the Philippines, returning to show her prowess in the most important American piano concerto written in the late part of the 20th century. "Century Rolls," dedicated to Emmanuel Ax, is a distinctive work and mark of a new style of composition for Adams and is a prelude of musical ideas hailing the end of the 20th century, including a play-on-words in the dazzling final movement "Hail, Bop" in reference to the comet which lighted our skies in 1997. Considered the "grandfather" of Korean music, Kang's stylistic "Dâlha" begins the program. Son-in-law of the great Czech composer Dvorak, Suk's work is evocative in the storytelling tradition of Bohemia. Copland's equally evocative "Dance for Martha" reminds audiences around the world of the beauty of country living. Ticket prices are P900, P600 and P350.

Tickets are available at Ticketnet (991-5555), Ticketworld at National Bookstore and Tower Records (891-9999) and CCP Box Office (832-3704).

BSP lowers '05 BOP surplus target to $464M

But officials say foreign direct investment will still be much higher next year

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas has scaled down its balance of payment surplus target for 2005 to $464 million from the original projection of $570 million surplus due to some deferred investments in the manufacturing sector.

In a press briefing yesterday, BSP Deputy Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said the target was lowered due to changes in the assumptions which the Board of Investments used in the program of fresh investments expected to come in next year.

But Tetangco added that the expected foreign direct investment in 2005 would still be significantly higher than the inflows this year.

Although the BOP target for 2005 has been lowered, it still represents a turnaround from the $516 million deficit expected for this year.

The BOP measures the foreign exchange transactions between the economy and the rest of the world. Its major components are the current account and the capital and financial account.

During yesterday's briefing, the BSP also announced that the country's current account chalked up a surplus of $2.91 billion in the first nine months of the year—57.1 percent better than a year ago, on stronger remittances from overseas Filipino workers and improved trade performance.

The current account records trade in goods and services as well as transfers. Any transaction which gives rise to a payment by a Philippine resident, like importation, is a deficit item, while any transaction which gives rise to a receipt like exporting or inward remittance is a surplus item.

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas building on Roxas Boulevard

BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said that for the third quarter alone, the current account in the third quarter remained at a surplus of $1.4 billion, higher than the $1.07 billion a year ago.

"The robust remittances from OFWs, coupled with the lower deficit in the trade-in-goods account were behind the improvement in the current account for the third quarter despite the weaker performance of the services account," Buenaventura said.

OFW remittances in the third quarter went up by 22.3 percent to $2.18 billion.

"The third quarter surge made up for the second quarter decline when anti-money laundering and counter terrorist financing restrictions introduced a number of new documentation requirements prior to remittance," he said.

The deterioration in the capital and financial account dragged down the country's overall balance of payment which continued to be in a deficit.

However, the BOP deficit of $178 million in the first nine months of the year was still an improvement over the $775 million deficit in the same period last year.

The trade-in-goods balance posted a lower deficit of $23 million in the third quarter as the 11.5 percent growth in exports during the period slightly outpaced the import growth of 10.9 percent.

Customs Brokers Act up for review

BY Ronnel W. Domingo

THE IMPLEMENTATION of the Customs Brokers Act has been deferred pending the review of its implementing rules amid opposition among importers and exporters, Trade Secretary Cesar V. Purisima yesterday said.

The Bureau of Customs announced the deferment through a Dec. 16 memorandum.

Purisima, who also chairs the Export Development Council, is leading industry players and several business chambers in pushing for the amendment of the law.

"(They) are objecting to a provision of the law that requires the hiring of professional customs brokers in transacting export papers with the BOC," the official said.

The provision automatically strips exporters and small businesses of the right to transact and process their own papers with the BOC as well as their right to sign their own export documents, Purisima explained.

He said customs brokers were agents by nature and exporters were principals who should not be barred in preparing their own papers.

"(The new procedure entails) additional costs and would mean longer turnaround time," Purisima said. "The law also contradicts the objectives and provisions of the Electronic Commerce Act as customs clearance work reverts back to manual processing."

Purisima said the law might have good objectives for customs brokers but it failed to consider the interests of other sectors like exporters, importers, forwarders and corporate customs brokers.

"It also failed to consider the other professionals engaged in the industry like lawyers, accountants and engineers," he said.

Among the groups opposing the Customs Brokers Act are the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Philippine Exporters Confederation, Semiconductors and Electronics Industries in the Philippines, Port Users Confederation, Freight Forwarders Association, Foreign Chambers of the Philippines (FCP) and the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry in the Philippines (JCCI).

In a position paper, the FCP said some of the law's provision would be a major setback rather than a benefit to the economy.

The JCCI said the law would increase the cost of trade and cause the loss of "a great number of jobs" which run counter to government goals.

Solons oppose lifting of fiscal incentives for investors

THE PROPOSAL to rationalize fiscal incentives granted to several industries and organizations faces rough sailing in Congress, as legislators and affected groups have appealed not to lift the tax and duty perks of selected sectors.

According to a government source, the House of Representatives has created a group that will gather all the amendments legislators want inserted into the bills on fiscal incentives rationalization. The proposed amendments will be discussed when the Lower House resumes session in January.

The source said Makati Rep. Butch Aquino objected to the provision in the

bill that seeks to lift the incentives granted to investors in the country's geothermal energy sector, such as income tax holiday and duty-free importation for capital equipment.

Antique Rep. Exequiel Javier, for his part, does not want to remove the fiscal incentives granted to coal production, amid the government's stand to revitalize the mining industry, the source also said.

According to a report by the House committee on ways and means, other groups that raised objections to some of the provisions of the proposed bill were the Department of Science and Technology, the National Dairy Authority, the Cooperative Development Authority, Department of Energy, PNOC-EDC, and Phividec Industrial Authority. They said the lifting of fiscal incentives granted to their sectors will adversely affect investments activities.

There are two bills related to the rationalization of fiscal incentives. One covers the incentives granted to firms registered with the Board of Investments, while the other covers the perks granted by several special laws.

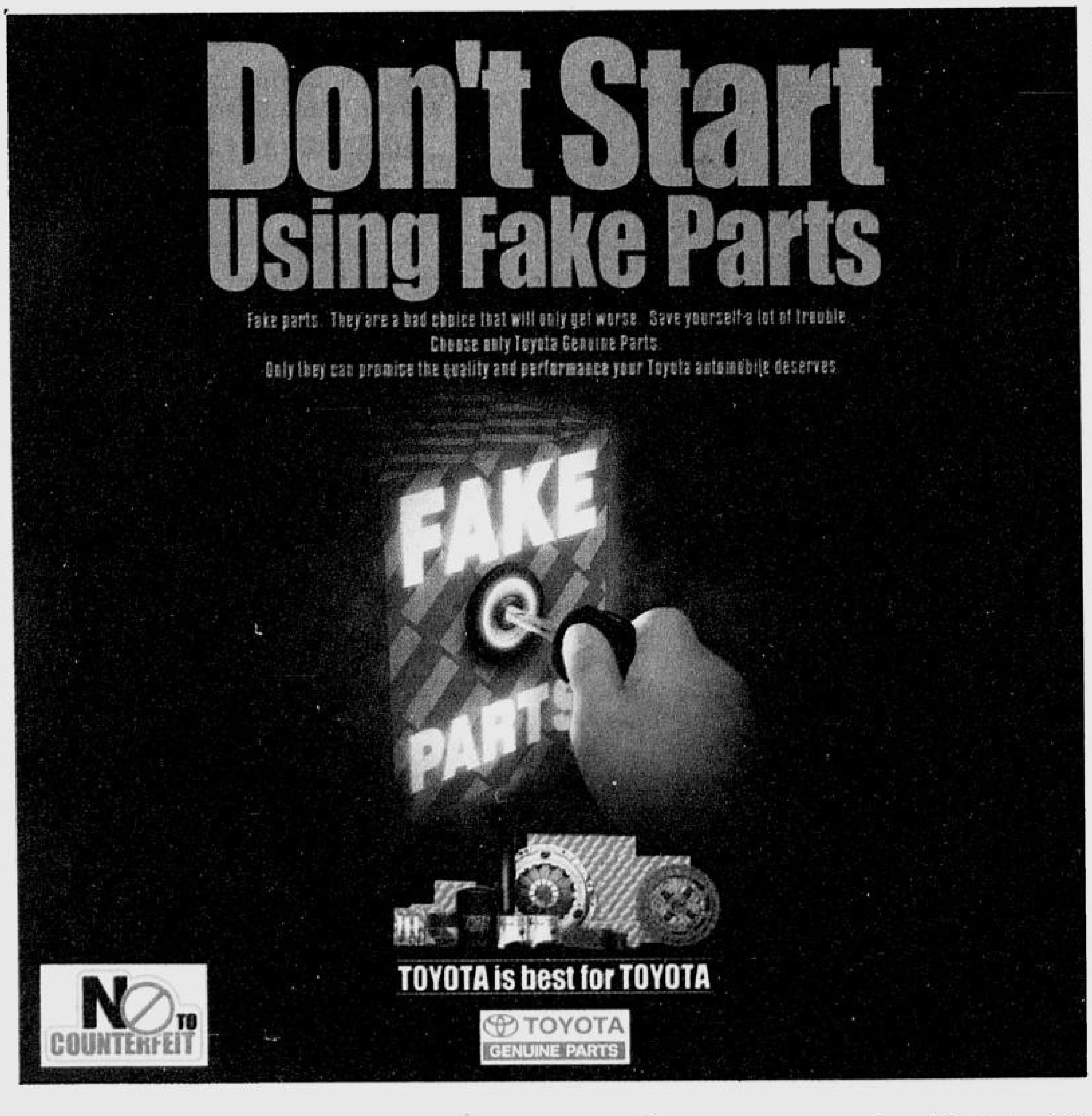
The first bill is drafted by the BOI, while the second is drafted by the Department of Finance. Under the BOI's draft bill, the government will come up with a new investment priorities plan, under which a new set of industries that will enjoy incentives are covered.

The list of the IPP will be changed every three years, compared with the present system where the IPP is changed every year.

The Arroyo administration has included the rationalization of fiscal incentives in her fiscal-reform agenda.

According to the government, it lost some P340 billion in taxes and duties in 2003 alone due to fiscal incentives.

Michelle V. Remo



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RP gets deteriorating mark from US bank

By Michelle V. Remo

US-BASED investment bank Bear, Stearns Co. Inc. has given the Philippines a "deteriorating" credit outlook for 2005.

According to bank officials, the Philippine government has yet to show significant progress in implementing the measures intended to solve the country's fiscal problem.

While the Philippines received a "deteriorating" credit outlook, China, Pakistan, and Indonesia all earned an "improving" mark from Bear, Stearns. India received a "stable" outlook while Malaysia earned a "positive" mark.

Although Congress has already passed the sin taxes law, the Philippines next year still faces the risk of a credit rating downgrade by a notch or two. According to Bear, Stearns, other fiscal-reform measures must get the nod of Congress so that their revenue impact may be felt early next year.

"Teams from Moody's and Fitch are reviewing their ratings for the Philippines as we speak, and could follow through with a one- to two-notch downgrade if they are not impressed with the current efforts of Congress to approve the legislation requested by President Macapagal-Arroyo," Bear, Stearns said in a paper on its 2005 outlook for Asian economies. Bear, Stearns was referring to the credit rating firms Moody's Investors Service and Fitch Ratings.

The investment bank said the Philippine government, although on track to meet its budget deficit target of P197.8 billion this year, should exert more effort to narrow down the fiscal gap, which is still estimated to hover above 4 percent of the gross domestic product this year.

The Arroyo administration is pushing for several fiscal reform measures. So far, Congress has passed only one—the sin taxes law. The Arroyo administration is hoping legislators will prioritize the revenue-raising measures early next year to offset the threat of a credit rating downgrade.

The other measures include the lateral attrition system for revenue-collection agencies, the increase of the value-added tax and the rationalization of fiscal incentives. Once all the measures are in place, the government can expect to generate over P100 billion in revenue every year.

Bear, Stearns also urged the Philippine government to continue its efforts to privatize assets of the National Power Corp., and to adopt a firmer stand against the growing budget deficit.

On a positive note, Bear, Stearns cited the "surprising" gross domestic product growth in the first three quarters of the year, which averaged at 6.5 percent, or higher than the 4.4 percent recorded the previous year.

"Although exports have improved somewhat in the early months of 2004, the key drivers of the economy remain agriculture and foreign remittances, it said. "These factors are responsible for the unusually stable performance of consumption in the formation of the Philippines' GNP."

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INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

The designer who loves women

Lanvin creative director Alber Elbaz talks about the difference between global and universal, and why Lanvin has no celebrity endorsers

IMPECCABLE details, fit and flawless tailoring make every Lanvin piece practically a work of art.

By Kitty Go
Contributor

TAIPEI— It wasn't a surprise for fashion insiders that Alber Elbaz, creative director of Lanvin, visited Taiwan. The bigger wonder is that took him so long. Aside from being a powerful fashion market in Asia, Taiwan is also the home of the 115-year-old couture house's new owner, Wang Shaw Lan, who bought the label in September 2001.

Madame Wang is among the growing number of Chinese businesspersons buying and reviving traditional European labels. The others are Christina Ong (Mulberry), Silas Chou (Asprey), Anthony Lim (Hardy Amies), Dickson Poon (Harvey Nichols and ST Dupont),to name a few.

Elbaz's visit was, of course, heralded by the Taiwanese press, but there was little promotion on the part of France's oldest couture house because the company chose to do an intimate tea and fashion show for about 100 people.

The show was not a retrospective or a current Spring/Summer 05 show, but a summary of what Elbaz feels are the best looks that epitomize the Lanvin spirit.

After the show, in one of Taipei's premiere private dining clubs, Elbaz spoke to the INQUIRER about globalization versus universality, fashion victims, his past fear of the fashion press and why Lanvin has not jumped on the celebrity bandwagon.

I hate to ask this question, which is such a cliché, but to this year's Marie-Claire designer of the year and Vogue USA's top three choice designers, I have to ask: What is chic for you?

You mean a person? Well, Jennifer, Connie, Amy, Kitty...

(This is when I realized he was reeling off names not of celebrities but of the girls who worked at Lanvin-Taiwan and *moi!*)

I guess that means anyone has the potential to be chic.

I love how you are wearing my jacket, by the way, and I am so flattered whenever the fashion press wears my clothes. I notice that many of them also wear my clothes to other people's shows during fashion week. For me, this is the greatest compliment.

Perhaps you can indulge me on another cliché question: What are your Fall 04/05 and Spring 05 must-haves?

You know I don't like to talk about those things.

I know but I'm curious if we have the same ideas because a lot of the key pieces you had in the show are what I have chosen for myself.

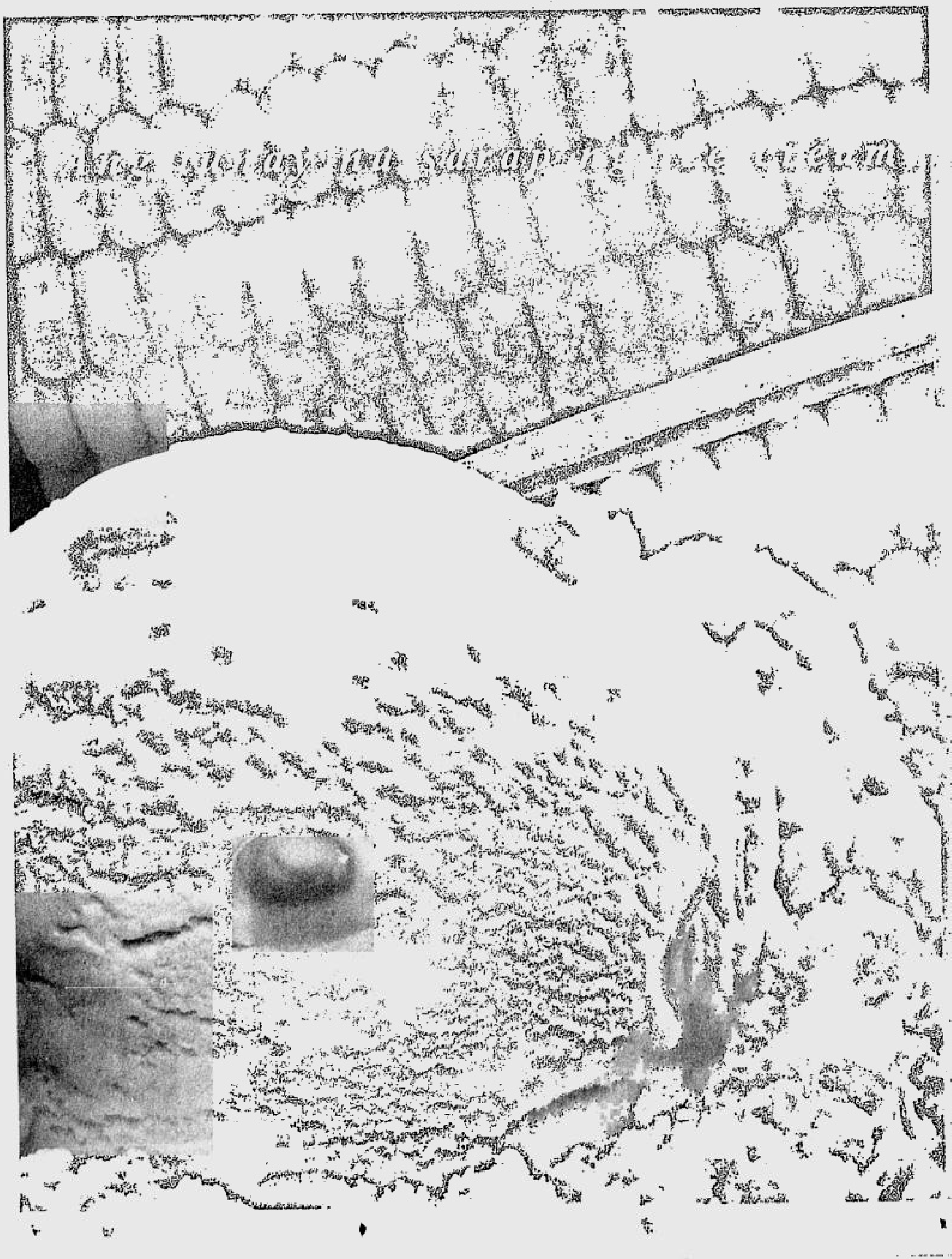
For Fall, I have to say it has to be the convertible coat with satin lapels, and for spring it has to be the volume skirt. You'll look nice in that.

Luxury is an overused word that many are wondering if it is a bubble that will

THE DESIGNER/ C2

MULTI-LAYERED rose silk chiffon with crystals was a Spring- Summer 2003 hit. Elbaz wanted to show jewels used as protection, not adornment, in much the same way the Romanovs of Russia were rumored to have avoided death in captivity in WW1.

ONE of the dresses Kate Moss made famous and thus became a complete sellout the world over.



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The designer who loves women

(Above) NOT quite a retrospective and not a spring/summer 2005 show either, but every iconic piece that epitomizes the new Lanvin was in the show. "I hope now that you see Lanvin, you see it in another way," said Elbaz.

From page C1

burst. I wonder, can we go any further from what we deem luxurious today?

I believe that it's not about labels, it's not about names and it's not about globalization either. The word is universal—it is very different from global but also very similar. Global is having the same storefronts on London, Paris and Taiwan, but universal is women in two different countries who both like chocolate and the same dress. *(The following week, Paul Smith also made an observation in his speech at the International Herald Tribune Luxury Conference in Hong Kong, saying that he just came back from New York, Paris and Milan and he could hardly tell one store from the other between cities).*

Everything is shifting. I believe everything that is happening today is much more personal, luxurious and individualistic. I find that people are looking for something more individual and they don't want to look like a clone of someone else. Everyone wants to look unique. I believe Lanvin has that personality, an individuality and beauty.

For the longest time everyone thought that whatever was ugly was modern and if you gave something beautiful it was old. So what I want to do is to show that beautiful is modern. *(At the same Luxury Conference, Elbaz, in his speech questioned the rush for vintage. "People look for vintage and I ask, 'Why?,' he said, "We should go forward. Tradition can limit you, but heritage can reinforce you.")*

What about people who wear head-to-toe Lanvin?

I hope people do not wear head-to-toe Lanvin. I am not a merchant. I am a designer. And I will not be happy to see a fashion victim. That is not my thing. I like it when people have a sense of freedom and they are not dictated on. I am not a dictator and this type of dictatorial fashion is not relevant anymore. Women today know what they want, know what they need, and they have a lifestyle that I find so complex. And I'm not here to tell them what to wear. You're going to wear what you want and if Lanvin is the right thing to wear at that time, it's wonderful. If you want to, you can mix it with a T-shirt from Gap or a sari or vintage piece.

In this fashion business environment of super or mega-brands, how are you going to grow your brand or do you even want to grow your brand to become a Gucci or LVMH?

I want to be able to keep control of what I'm doing and keep uniqueness in the collection. I don't want to be something that I am not. I am staying in a company that is human size, which is not too big nor too small. (Lanvin employs about 300 people worldwide.) It is still personal and I can still see and do everything.

I know about commercialism—some of the best business people I have ever met in my 20 years of working were artistically oriented and a lot of artists are business-oriented. When I do a collection I don't think of commercial success or what will sell. I want to bring fantasy back to this kind of world of luxury and mostly I work with one element: desire.

(In a separate conversation, Elbaz mentioned that he cannot continue the fantasy "if the boy did not go home to Brooklyn every night to continue dreaming?" At the IHT Luxury Conference he also credited his former employer and mentor, the late Geoffrey Beene, who taught him not to use the word "commercial" but instead say "desirable.")

Does this mean there is no current must-have bag and seasonal must-buys?

I want clothes with some sort of meaning—that a woman will look good in and not only in a show. I don't believe, personally, in a fashion show where the main purpose is promoting perfume and cigarettes and maybe a bag. This is not my story. My story is that I make women look good and feel good; then if they want the bag or the perfume, that's perfect but that's not what I'm doing. *(Lanvin shows hardly parade bags or have blatant displays of accessories.)* I don't do a bag in every other look and I don't go after the customer.

You mean not even celebrities?

Many companies are doing it. Everyone is telling me that [celebrity endorsements] are so important. I made sure that we did not run after everyone. Because when they come to you, you have a better dialogue and when they come to us and say so and so would like to wear Lanvin, then I work with the actress, but I don't believe in running after people and paying them money to wear my clothes. I think those days are over and if someone wants it, whether she is famous or not famous, I will help her.

Is that the way you also handle your personal press? Cautiously? Because until last year, there wasn't very much on you or Lanvin.

When I started at Lanvin (he joined in October 2001) I always had this weird relationship with the press. You can be so crucial and critical about things but it's one thing to sell and another to do. And to do sometimes takes so much energy to put it together and it was always about whether they would love it or not. I remember just before my first show of Lanvin, a journalist friend in Paris said to me, "Alber, I don't understand why you're scared or tense about it because they are women and women, you love. So what is the problem?

All of a sudden it clicked. From then on I decided I was not going to be scared of the press. I am going to do clothes to please women—the mothers, the daughters, the wives, and you. I will not make clothes that not only you can write about or photograph but that you will wear. And when I see a press person wearing my clothes, I feel this is the best compliment I can ever get.

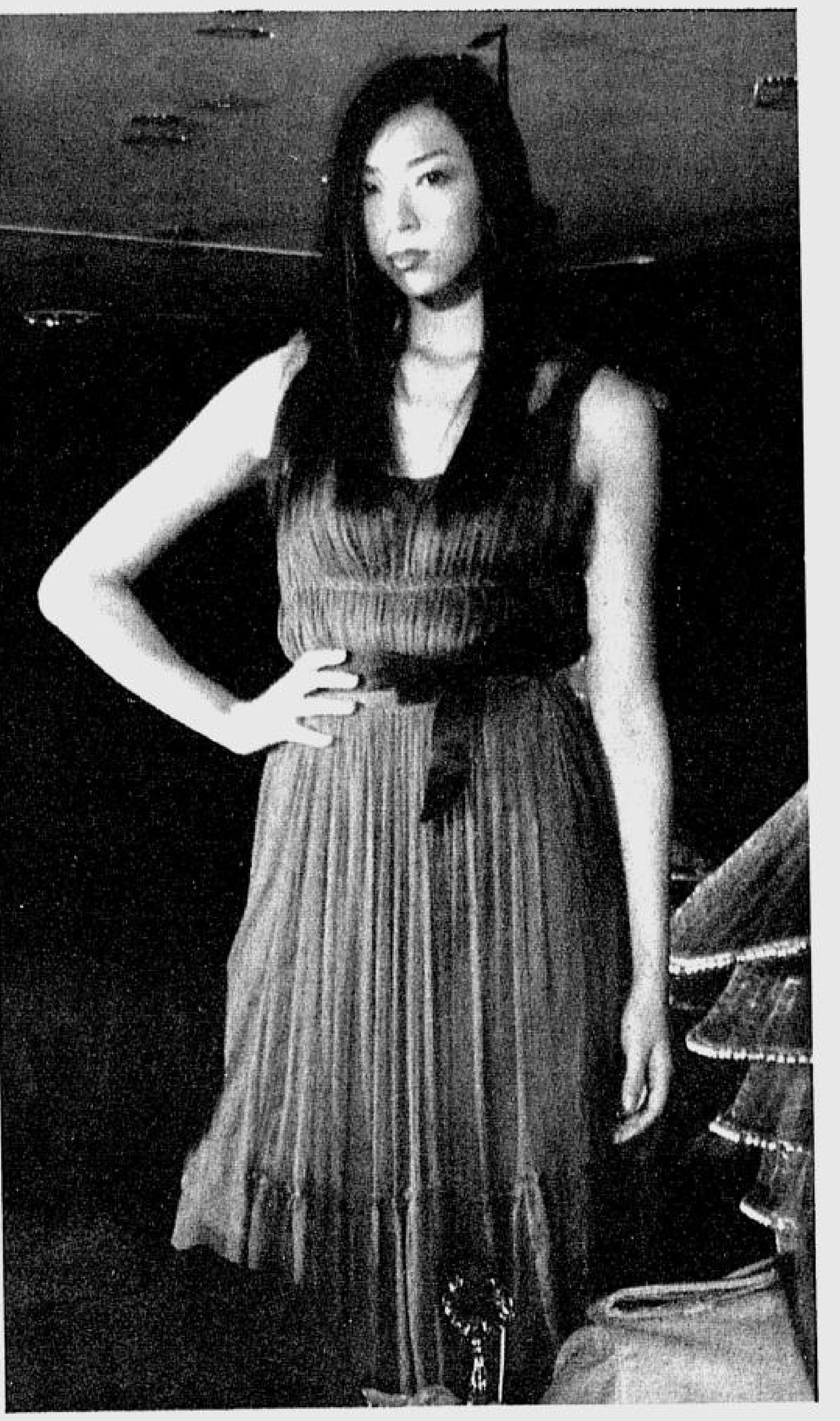
I think it is very good that I don't think like a merchant but like a designer. First of all this is what I was trying to explain: People ask me what is your title—commercial director, artistic director, but titles don't mean anything. What I do is make clothes. I am trying to work with women and understand them and build my whole store around this. If it sells I'm very happy and most of the time I work on pieces women desire. *[End of interview.]*

Simple business

The fashion business is not only fodder for bestsellers and gossip columns but is more so a business that contributes billions to the world economy. Unlike finance and industry, fashion is one of the few businesses that hinges on the right management of "createurs" and commerce.

Despite that, in his emotional speech at the IHT's Fashion Luxury Conference, Elbaz told 650 industry titans that included Bernard Arnault, Sidney Toledano, Rosita Missoni, Dickson Poon, Peter Marino Ferrucio Ferragamo, Diego della Valle, Santo Versace, etc.: "Our industry is so simple. At the end of the day it is: a woman, a dress, a dressing room and a mirror."

As Elbaz himself said in this interview, "It is one thing to sell, it is another thing to do."



PLEATS Plisse: A finely pleated number not quite vintage, which illustrates Elbaz's desire to move on from vintage

SOMEONE who wanted to be a doctor after vacating his dream job at Saint Laurent: Elbaz takes a bow in Taipei celebrating what he is good at, "making clothes."

LIVING up to a tradition since 1889: For someone who left France for New York in 1986 with "one suitcase of dreams, another of ambition and 800 dollars," reinforcing a legacy has made Elbaz one of today's greatest talents.

WHO knew strapless and shapeless can look great with the lift of a brooch?

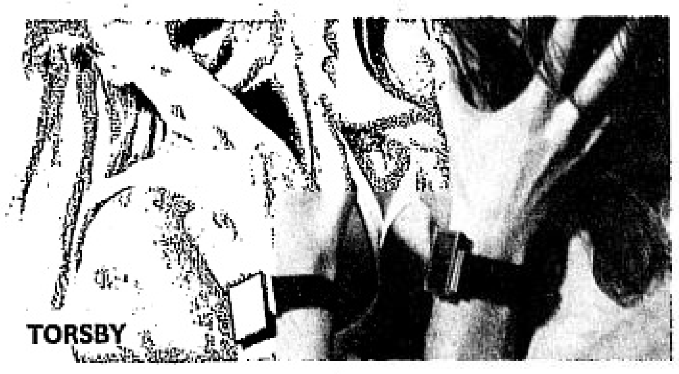
AN ICONIC piece with draped front that put green on the map from S/S 2003 made popular by "Sex in the City's" Kim Catrall

ELBAZ hates recommending "must-haves," but for S/S 2005 it has to be the volume skirt.

SLASH and brand: Intricate handwork sets Lanvin apart, placing it at the niche semi-couture level.

SINCE F/W 2004, Elbaz has been fixated with pearls by wrapping them in black tulle.

FALL 2003's iconic look of gold lame backed on black which made it to Lanvin's international ads



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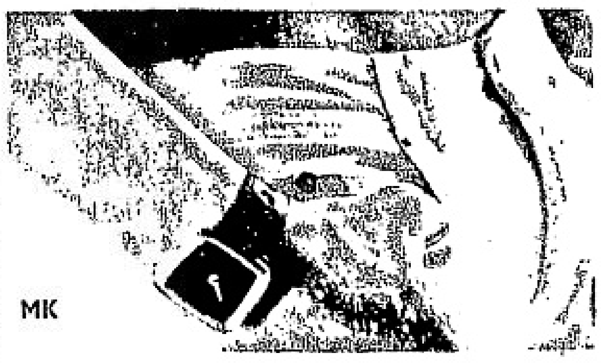

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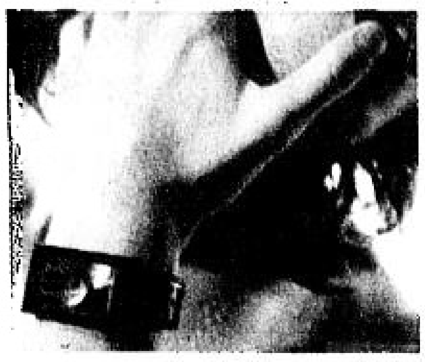


FROST and
Speedster TD (left)

A Swede in Hollywood

ANOTHER Swede is making a name for itself around the world. Axcent of Scandinavia is one of the newest and hippest watch brands to be introduced in the Philippines. Launched in 1996, the watches have done the Hollywood scene, featured in films like "I, Robot" and "Catwoman."

Celebrities who wear Axcent watches include Kid Rock, Robbie Williams and Brian Cox.

Axcent watches are designed by award-winning designers, mostly from Sweden's National College of Arts, Crafts, and Design. The designs are inspired by Sweden's natural beauty and culture, but are adapted to the needs and preferences of an international market.

The unisex Axcent watches feature different color combinations and trendy designs. They are available at prices that will allow people of whatever age and nationality to wear trendsetting watches.

Among Axcent's most popular models are the Slip On, designed by Petra Nygren and inspired by laced-up stilettos; Frost, designed by No Picnic and has its glass frosted over; the bestselling and Hollywood favorite Broadband, again by Nygren; and the big and bold Sphere, designed by Daniel Jakobsson.

Axcent of Scandinavia is available at Watch Republic in Glorietta 3, Market! Market!, Power Plant Mall, Limketkai Mall Davao, and SM Southmall, Fairview, Pampanga and Batangas.

CERAMIQUE White

Techno holiday timepieces

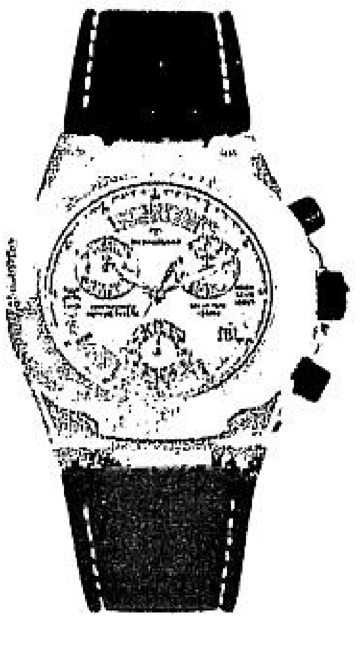
WHILE timepieces were originally used to simply tell time, contemporary watch artistry and complex functions have undoubtedly elevated watches to a luxury accessory.

Such is the case with TechnoMarine, a testimony to founder Frank Dubarry's passion for expressing his deep appreciation of marine art.

This Christmas, allow TechnoMarine to lead you through its choice line of timepieces and help you carefully select the perfect Techno Christmas gift.

TechnoMarine is available at TechnoMarine flagship store Greenbelt 3, Ayala Center, Makati; TechnoMarine boutique, Unit 311, 3/F SM Megamall Bldg. A, Mandaluyong; Rafael Jewellery at 2/L, Shangri-La Plaza Mall, Edsa cor. Shaw, Mandaluyong or at the mezzanine, Makati Shangri-La Hotel, Makati; My Diamond, 2/L Glorietta 4, Ayala Center, Makati; and Time Plus 75, G/F Greenhills Theatre mall; Washington Rockwell, R1/L Powerplant Mall, Makati.

ALPHA
Roman
AR10



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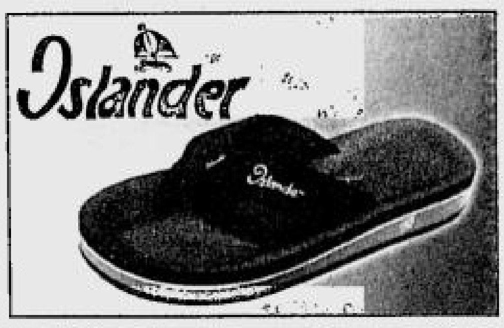

Islander

OXYGEN
Facial Mask

CERAMIDE Topical
Serum gels

ASIAN Foot Bath

Gifts of pampering, health and youth

WHAT do you give friends who have everything? Those who can afford whatever they want and give the most generous gifts?

The answer came to me when I tried out three treatments at The Spa Greenbelt (tel. 8401325). The people I'm referring to are usually workaholics who earn big bucks but are stressed out from all the pressure. They don't pamper themselves regularly either because they find it unproductive, or they really have no time for it.

My suggested treatments here are affordable and will definitely be appreciated.

MAKEOVER 911

Kinny Salas

Spa treatments

Asian foot therapy (P680). All my walking in 4-inch heels that entire day from meetings to Christmas shopping had me limping. The hour-long treatment I got started with a *pandan* petal foot soak/bath with warm stones under the basin to soothe my throbbing feet.

Therapist Allison then exfoliated the dead skin from my feet up to my knees and proceeded with foot reflexology. She worked out all the kinks, really went over the areas that caused me pain and kneaded it all away.

When it was done, it was as if the whole torture I had subjected my feet to never happened.

Oxygen facial (P1,400). As an insomniac and mallrat, my facial skin gets the most abuse from pollution and poor circulation, causing a dull complexion that makes me look older.

Facial specialist Gay cleansed, moisturized and revived my face with the highest-grade oxygen products. A special mask was applied to penetrate deep into the epidermis to remove impurities, leaving the skin looking brighter, softer, smoother and more radiant.

The mask stung a bit, but it was tolerable. The oxygen tank was then brought out, and my face was sprayed, leaving it feeling more hydrated afterward.

Herbal massage (P1,300). My masseuse, Jinky, started Shiatsu-style by putting pressure on my torso and limbs. The main feature of this massage was several steamed pouches containing lime leaves, lemon grass and other Thai herbs, which were pressed along certain points of the body to provide relief and comfort.

It's highly recommended for those with arthritis, rheumatism and, in my case, someone sore from carrying too many packages the whole day.

Used in conjunction with Shiatsu massage, this hot compress treatment increases circulation and energy flow, removes toxins from the muscles, reduces water retention and increases joint and spine flexibility.

This 75-minute procedure was my favorite treatment among the three I experienced, with the Asian foot therapy a close second because of all the pains I felt that day. But if I were to attend a special occasion, I would prioritize the oxygen facial about three days before.

The Spa has other branches in Acropolis (6342848), Bel-Air (8955858) and Alabang (8503490/6836).

Healthy promo

Health Express has an ongoing promo called "Eat, Drink and Be Merry" which combines three Health Express supplements into a set and gives a 25-percent discount in the total bill.

The supplements are Garlic Oil to lower cholesterol and blood pressure, Silymarin Milk Thistle to heal and detoxify the liver from excessive alcohol consumption, preservatives and unhealthy fat, and Ampalaya to control insulin production so we burn off the excess sugar from all the sweets we indulge in.

Gift of youth

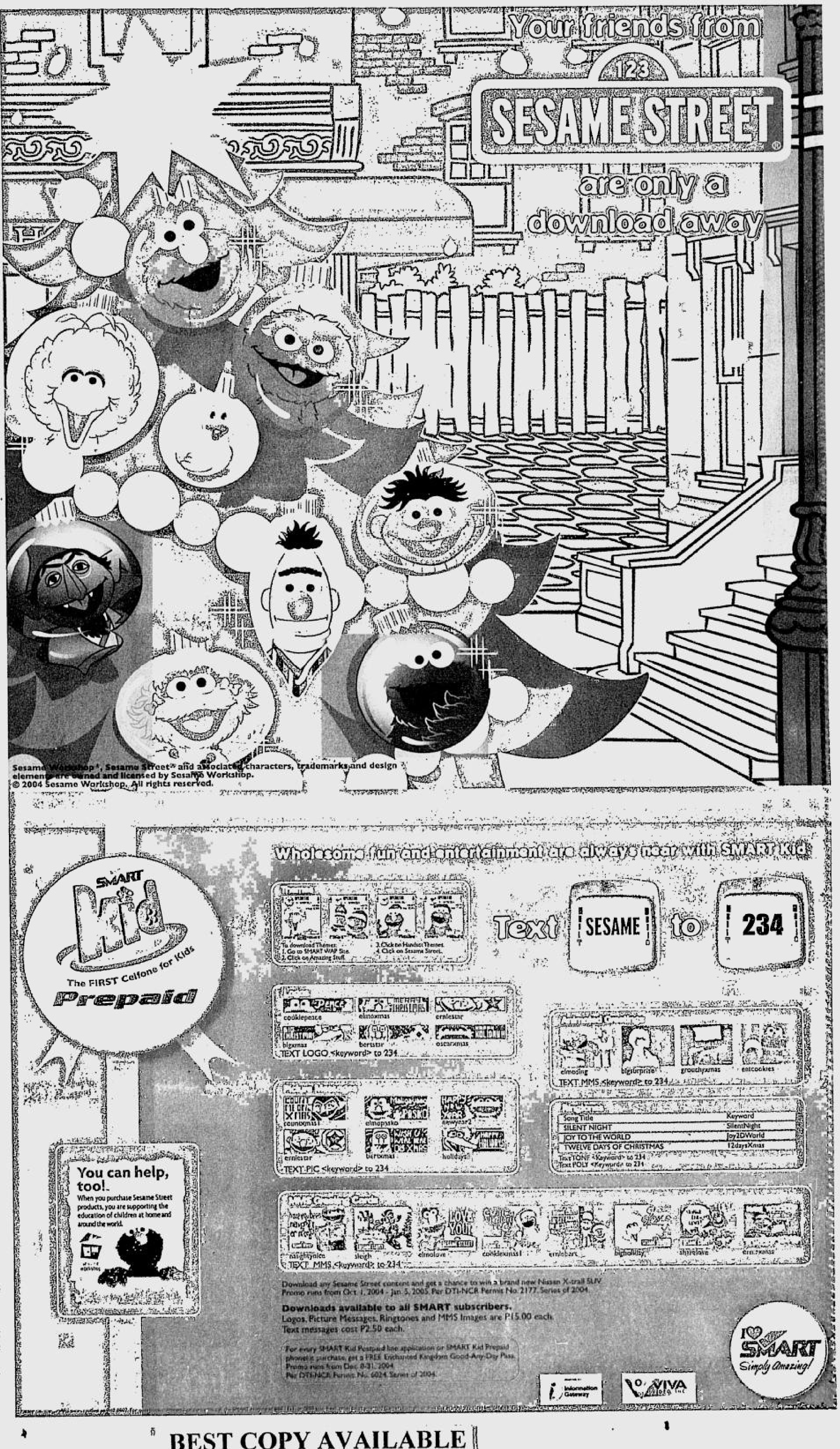
Remember my contact from Jeunesse Pharma who introduced me to the Vitamin K for bruises and dark circles? She has new goodies for me in the form of Ceramide topical serum gels with Vitamins C and A.

The gel reduces the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles, is easily absorbed into the skin and feels silky but non-greasy. The content of one capsule is enough to cover the face, neck, chest and both hands.

A friend of mine who just gave birth swears it prevented her from getting stretch marks while pregnant with her 8-pound baby.

Call 6888062 or e-mail jeunessemanila@yahoo.com.

E-mail the author at kinnysalas@yahoo.com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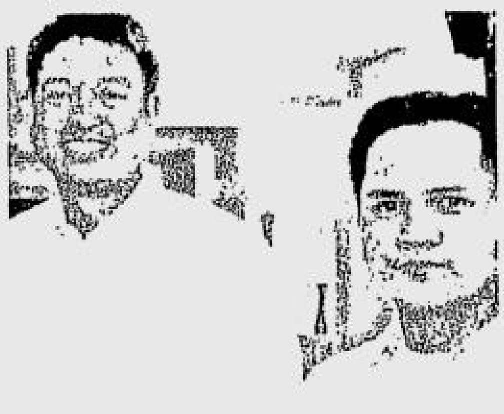
CITIBANK executives Cecille Fonacier, Michellina Triwardhany, Nina Aguas and Jenny Lacerna with Canon's Gelo Martinez and Patrick Cruz

HEY, LET'S EAT. Citibank's Vanessa Yu, Quadtron Technologies general manager Jason Teh and Fujitsu Philippines product manager for desktop and mobile computing Maricar Bernardo

EYE-CATCHING program host Angel Jacob



PILIPINAS Shell Corp. vice president for retail Sammy de Guzman and Cards marketing manager Ambo Demaisip

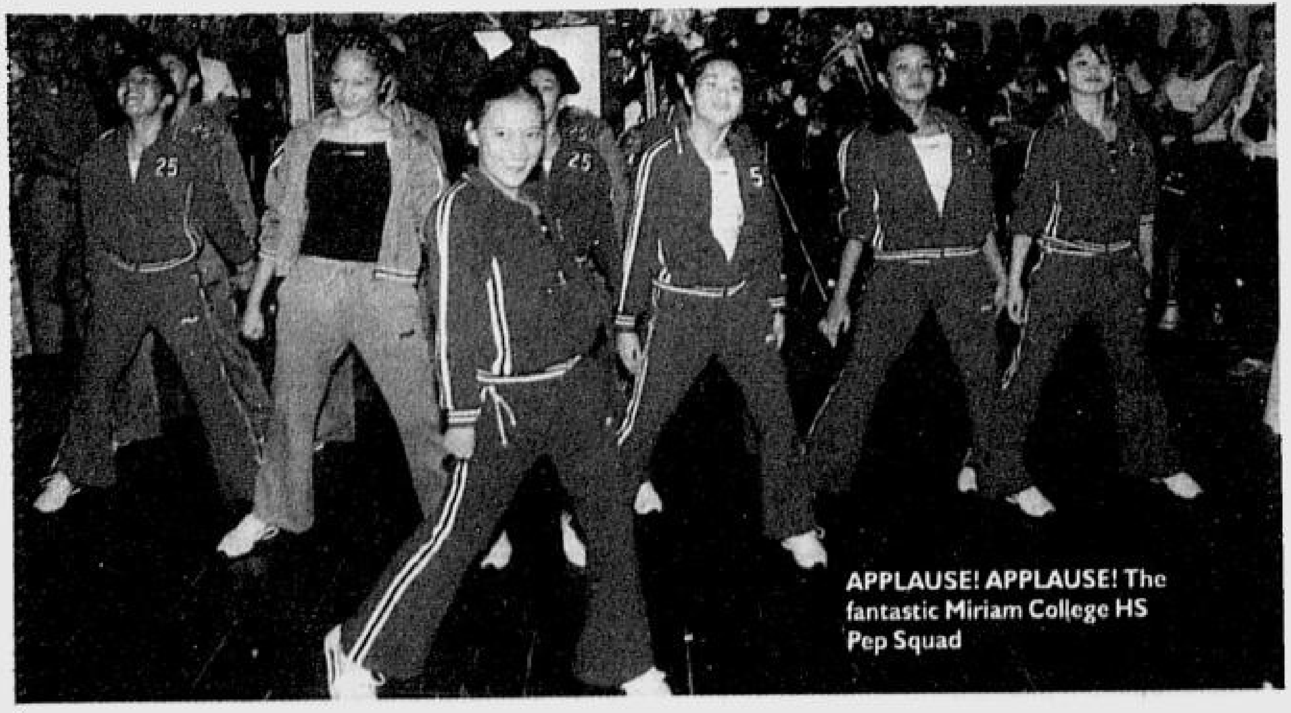
Consumer preference comes with a prize

SONY Philippines' May Sanico, Cats Motors' Felix Ang and Andros Villaraza, Sony Philippines' Larry Secreto; (seated) Cathay Pacific's Lynette Sugay and Rhoda Capuno, and Citibank's Jenny Lacerna

FILA marketing manager Marty Albert with Bianca Araneta and Pepan Marave, Philippine Formula 3 champion

WANDA Louwallien, young Carlo Albert and socialite Lilibeth Magalona Gomez

WE LOVE FILA. Chiqui Samson with Ana A.S. Bitong and Colleciones New York's Marieliese Saldana Evaristo



APPLAUSE! APPLAUSE! The fantastic Miriam College HS Pep Squad

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by Alex Van Hagen on Kodak Max

CITIBANK launched recently its "Most Preferred Brands Promotion" at the Little Italy of Greenbelt, Pepato, in a program superbly hosted by eye-catcher Angel Jacob.

Citibank's mega hotshots were in the fun launch: fashion plate **Nina Aguas**, country business manager for global consumer group; cards business director **Michellina Triwardhany**; marketing director **Cecille Fonacier**; and cards marketing vice president **Jenny Lacerna**.

"This promotion is our way of rewarding the cardholders for their loyal support," said Michellina. Being voted as Asia's Most Preferred Bank validates the fact that we at Citibank continue to be successful in fulfilling our commitment to serve our customers."

The promo gives Citibank cardholders a chance to make a certain amount of purchases through their cards to win top consumer preferred brands. The promo lasts until Jan. 31, 2005.

Congratulating Citibank were hot representatives from Asia's other preferred consumer brands.

Prizes at stake? A brand new Mercedes Benz C180 Kompressor Saloon; a Canon Powershot Pro1 Digital Camera with Canon Pixma IP6000D photo printer; a cool P100,000 worth of Shell fuel cards; a Fujitsu Lifebook S6220; a 43-inch Sony Projection TV; an Apple iPoD 40G with dock and Apple Care protection plan; a Hewlett Packard iPAQ 3715; trips for two to Hong Kong via Cathay Pacific; a Panasonic Home Theater SC-HT-900; and a Samsung E800 mobile phone.

How can anyone not take a chance in winning any of these goodies? I know I'll give it a shot.

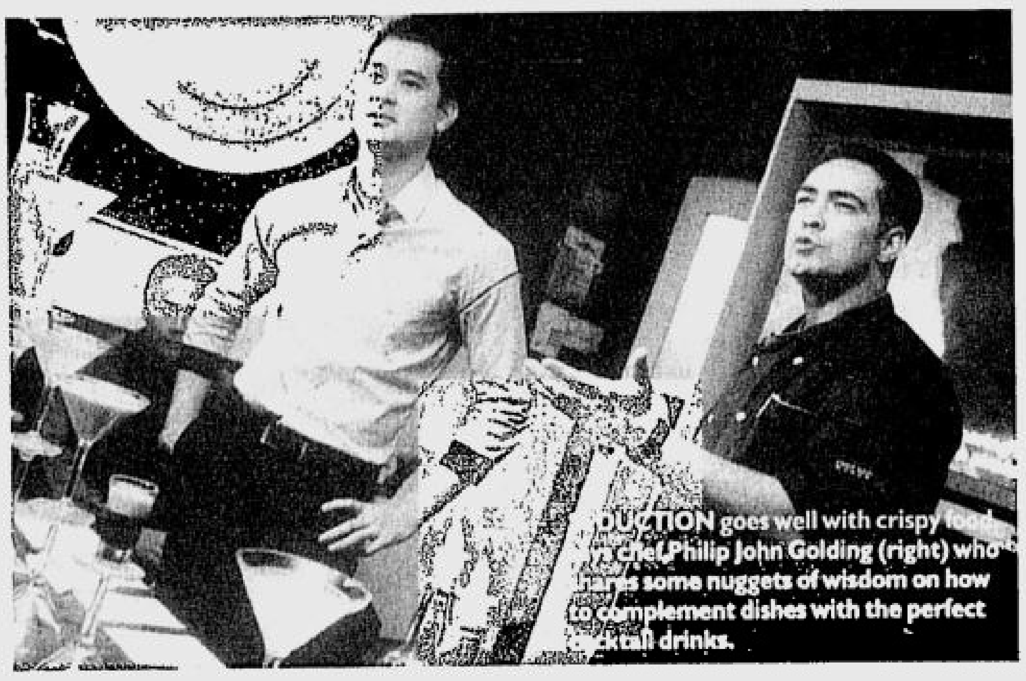
A recent Asian survey showed Citibank ranking first in the bank/insurance/investment service category, and 27th among the 1,000 most preferred brands in Asia.

Spirits of the season

Cocktails are sooo cool these days, *palanggas*. And before you could bat an eyelash, Manille's bar-hopping and karaoke-loving set had the chance to experience firsthand the exciting, so "in" drink of martinis and cocktails at the swinging Red Box Karaoke in Greenbelt 3, Ayala Center.

Synonymous with sophistication, allure and delicious decadence, cocktails and martinis hold a hallowed place in social history.

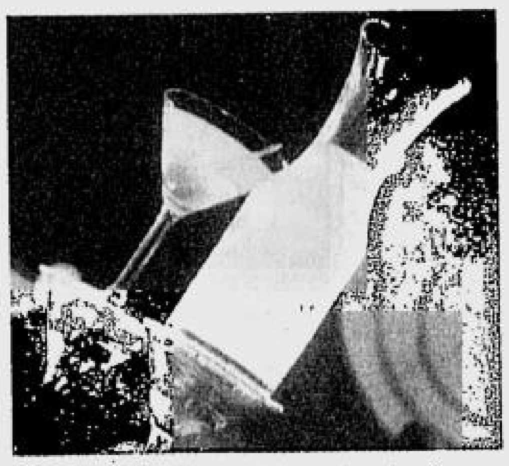
At Red Box, the buzz was all about the new original concoction of premium Scotch Whiskey and the intriguing and refreshing Liquid Tao. The bar also had imaginative cocktails known the world over, such as the Flamin Lamborghini, Kamikaze, Lychee Martini, and the naughty but yummy Seduction, which I just couldn't resist so had another round of.



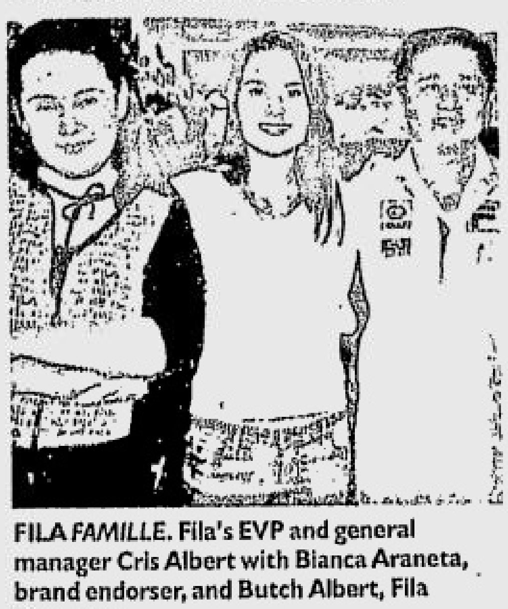
DUCTION goes well with crispy food [illegible] chef Philip John Golding (right) who shares some nuggets of wisdom on how to complement dishes with the perfect cocktail drinks.

MAKE mine Liquid Tao Martini. Raquel Johnson with popular young couple Vicky Veloso and her husband Robert Barrera

TERRIE Gutierrez of Manual magazine and Mina Sunico of Mega dig their martinis.



GIVE us a fab night of delightful cocktail drinks like the Lychee Martini, Kamikaze, Flaming Lamborghini and Seduction.



FILA *FAMILLE*. Fila's EVP and general manager Cris Albert with Bianca Araneta, brand endorser, and Butch Albert, Fila president

Red Box Karaoke's resident operations manager, James "Cocktail" Aguilar, gamely provided a quick instructional on the basic spirits and equipment one would need to stock up in one's home bar. He definitely charmed all of us with some bottle flipping, before finally making sure we tried some of the mmm new cool cocktails.

Then **Philip John Golding**, the guest chef, educated us on cocktail and food pairings. Chef John is the GM chef of the legendary Yats International Wine Club, which just happens to be the biggest wine cellar in Asia, dahlings.

Hey, after a great fun informative time, I can't wait for another round of martinis and cocktails.

Need dinner and drinks? No problem. Red Box Karaoke has the spirits to keep our spirits high, *palanggas*.

Fila's new tact

Even from a distance I knew exactly where I was going as I looked at the blazing red color of the boutique of the world-renowned Fila at Robinsons Galleria, *palanggas*.

After we were welcomed by Fila's Cris and Butch Albert and Ana Bitong, we were treated to a phenomenal performance from Miriam College HS Pep Squad, which drew the crowds like bees to the honeycomb.

The new Fila boutique is the latest in a string of 20 new stores that are set to open nationwide by 2005, *palanggas*.

"The key to our expansion plans is finding the right investment partners for our Fila boutiques. We are currently entertaining queries from strategic partners who would like to own a Fila franchise," said Cris Albert, executive vice president of Sport Life Inc., the exclusive Philippine licensee of Fila.

"Depending on the size of the boutique and its potential sales, an investment of at least P2 million for three years guarantees regular income earnings at 20 percent annum starting at year one. This includes the construction or renovation of the boutique, Fila stocks inventory and administrative and operational expenses. The investment is returned after three years or can be renewed."

"Sport Life manages the store, pays for the overhead and takes care of the inventory. It's a simple franchise setup: the strategic partner invests money and Sport Life runs the business. You definitely can't go wrong with this franchise," said Albert.

Those interested to obtain a Fila franchise may call Ruth Ang at 8921471 or 8921477.

A fashion show had gorgeous Bianca Araneta and Pepon Morave, the Philippines' leading hot formula driver, showing off the latest Fila active lifestyle collection.

This Christmas,
our gift to our
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Out on a fashion limb for children

Bernie Liu of Penshoppe puts his house of fashion—and contradictions—behind the Children's Hour cause

Text by Alex Y. Vergara
Photos by Jon Unson

BERNIE Liu, CEO of Golden ABC Inc. and chair of Children's Hour in Cebu, with presidential daughter Luli Arroyo and the Club Pen 2005 models during turnover of donations in Cebu

BUSINESSMAN Bernie Liu, CEO of Golden ABC Inc., has always likened his company to a "house of contradictions." Yet the man behind the successful youth wear brand called Penshoppe was probably just being true to his character when he recently took over the reins of the Children's Hour (CH) in his native Cebu.

Since relaunching CH in Cebu several months ago, Liu has been tirelessly appealing to employees within and outside his company to donate part of their wages—worth an hour or more—to help the province's poor youth. His pleas didn't fall on deaf ears, as he and presidential daughter Luli Arroyo recently presided in the turnover of the initial batch of donations at the Ayala Center Cebu.

Liu and the presidential daughter accepted the donations from heads of various donor companies, who represented their employees.

Donors ranged from employees of big firms and organizations such as M. Lhuillier Jewelers, Bank of the Philippine Islands, MATIMCO, Cebu Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Ayala Center Cebu, to smaller, homegrown ones such as Colours Foto Shop, Best of New York, Janice Minor Export Inc., and Jelly and Fish. There were also individual donors, like Arroyo.

Before Liu took over, his predecessors led by Bob Gothong, vice chair of WG&A, were able to raise P1.2 million. The challenge, he says, is to raise at least double the amount.

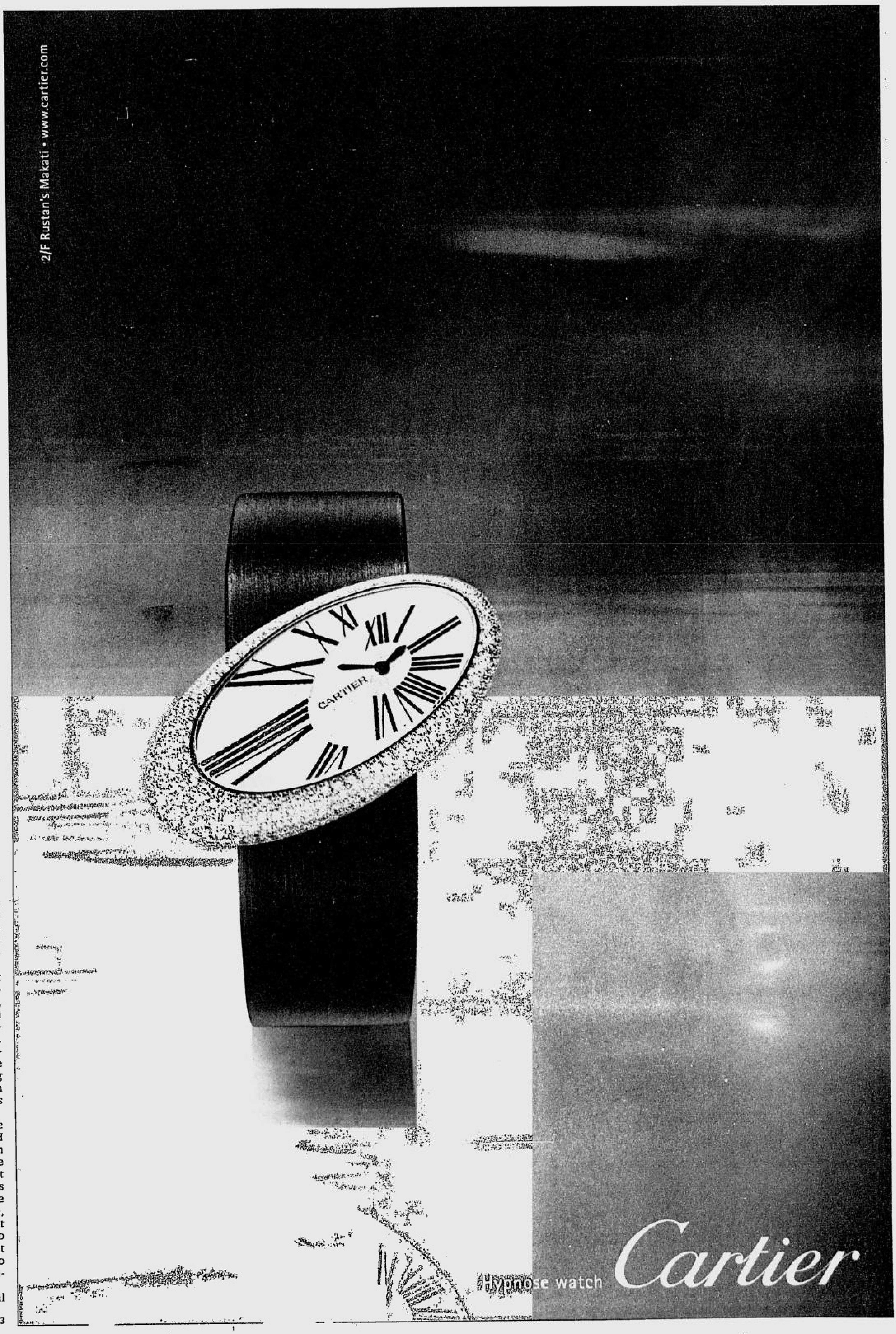
A typical donation is an hour's worth of wage, but organizers aren't stopping people from donating more. Certain firms such as Golden ABC even match the amount pooled by their employees. Such a gesture acts both as an incentive for their workers and as a challenge to company executives. So as not to break the momentum, people at Penshoppe decided to submit their donation at a much later date.

"It's easy to target business organizations for donations, but there's such a thing as donor fatigue," says Liu. "What makes Children's Hour unique and more appealing is its attempt to reach out to the grass roots."

Donations are channeled to the CH national office in Manila before they're allocated to different regions. Rural areas usually get more than what they gave, says Liu, as most donors from Metro Manila aren't that particular as to where their donations end up.

The CH national

OUT/ E3



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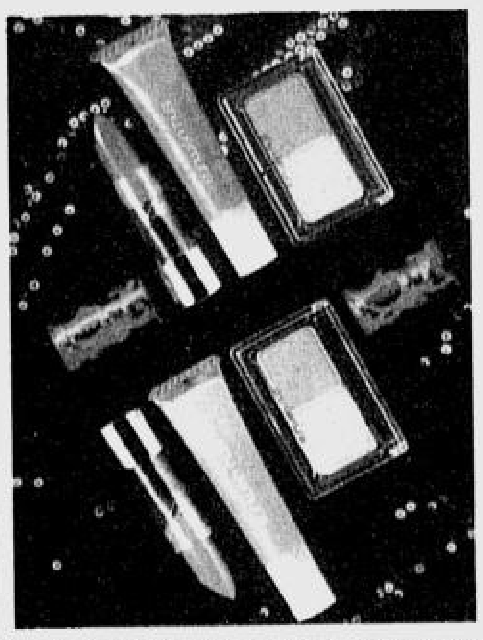
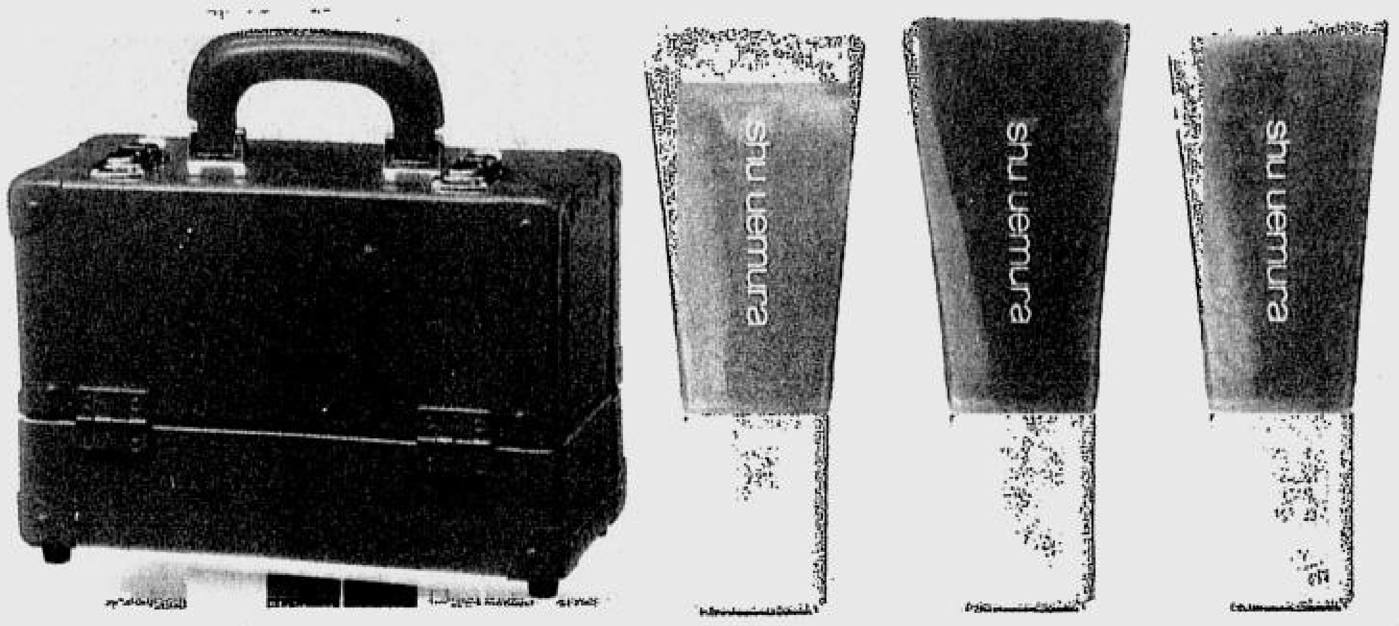
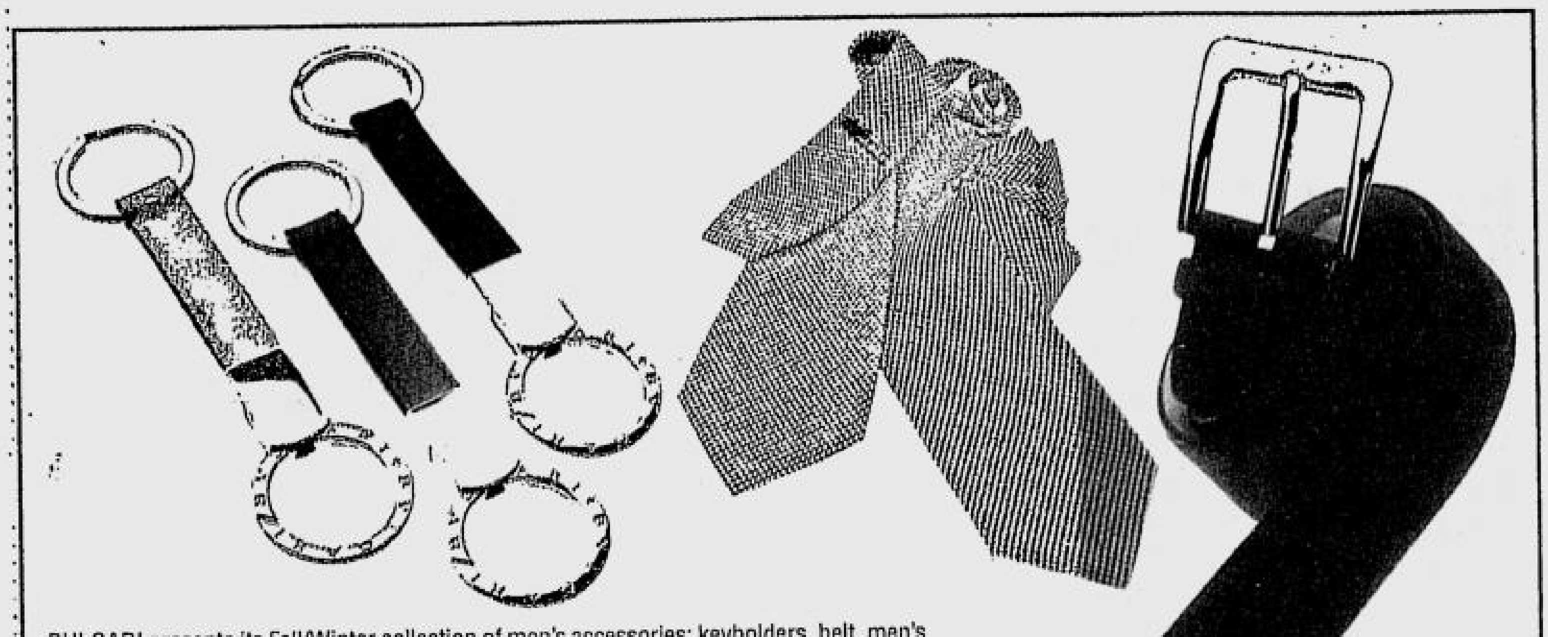


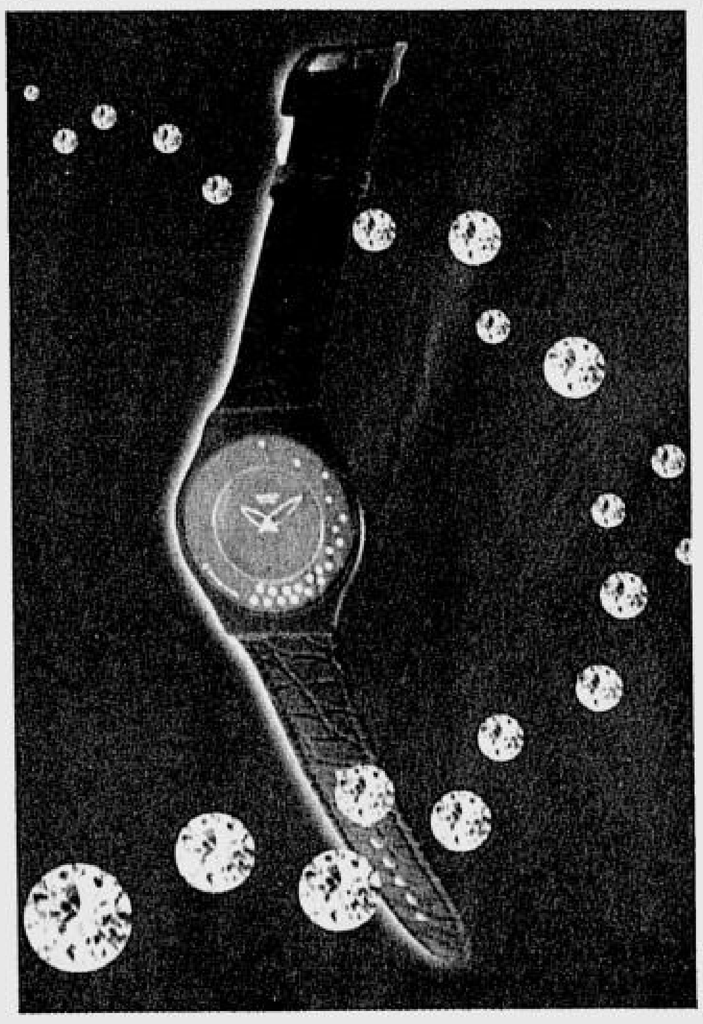
THE SHU Uemura 2005 Chic & Rouge Collection centers around achieving the festive look in a quick, effervescent way. The collection helps women look and feel the opulence of the season with simple but rich colors and textures. Hence very wearable eye shadow duos in metallic gold and yellow and metallic gold and pink pear; Sweet Lip Glosses in amber gold and jasmine gold; and Rouge 4 lip colors in red silk and pink pearly gold shades. These items are available at the Shu Uemura counters in Rustan's Makati and Rustan's Shangri-La Plaza Mall. The Chic & Rouge Xmas Collection is available now until supplies last.



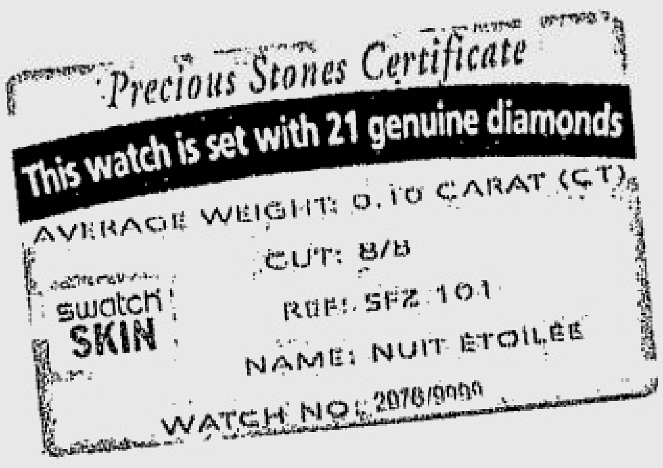
Last-minute premium presents



BULGARI presents its Fall/Winter collection of men's accessories: keyholders, belt, men's handkerchief, silk ties, and men's watches. The collection boasts of an array of silk jacquard and cashmere ties. Each of the new models carries the name of the main street in a selection of cities where a Bulgari store is present—Via, Condotti, Via della Spiga, Avenue Montaigne, La Croisette, New Bond Street, Fifth Avenue, and Rodeo Drive. The collection comes in navy blue, red, yellow and burgundy with a blend of gold, china, anthracite and cream. Available at the Bulgari stores in 6750, Ayala Center and Greenbelt 4, Makati.



DIAMONDS to die for. Limited-edition/numbered Swatch Skin with 21 diamonds... available only in selected stores



Precious Stones Certificate

This watch is set with 21 genuine diamonds

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swatch SKIN

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EASTWOOD City's Style Centrale offers chic clothes and accessories. Featured shops are Girlshoppe, 152 Lily, Hot Kisses, Tangerine, Venetta, Kaila, Bubbly Fashion, ECO, Vintage, Playroom and Purple Candy, Bonne Nuit and Bareskin. Style Centrale is located along Orchard Road, near City Walk I.

Holiday hair and makeup trends

PRIVÉ II senior stylist Normie Molina flanked by hair models

PRIVÉ II, the partnership between proprietor David Choa and beauty and styling guru Geoff Simpson, is launching its very own Style Book for Holiday 2004. It's the first-ever guide to hair and makeup styles for Filipino men and women.

The book is the work of a number of Prive II stylists, among them: Normie Molina, who has spent 18 years of her life as a stylist, 16 of those with Salon de Manila; Cris Estalilla, a multi-awarded stylist and is the only Filipino chosen to become part of a team of stylists set to open the Frank Provost Salon in Dubai; and Gretchen Choa, who spent nine grueling weeks of training in Singapore learning the most advanced makeup trends.

Privé II predicts a modern, deconstructed take on the now classic layered look as the next hairstyle rage. This "Urban Edge" fits city dwellers willing to show their adventurous side.

Privé II also recommends going big and bouncy for day, shifting to soft, curled tresses for night, a style it calls "Ethereal Goddess." With smoky, lined eyes and glossy lips, this look is perfect for cool, romantic December nights.

And what better way to get the holiday vibe than to use color, metallics, and shimmer to brighten up those peepers?

URBAN Edge makes a bold statement with color and highlights.

URBAN Edge is a modern, deconstructed take on the now-classic layered look.

Dramatic eyes can overwhelm, so steer clear of the heavily made-up look. Use a light foundation base to showcase soft, supple skin. The face is clean and glowing, dewy not matte. Load up on the mascara. Go ahead and try burgundy instead of the usual black.

Warm tones are in, so experiment with plum and green eye shadow. Leave the lips nude or line contours and fill in with clear or yummy fruit glosses. Top it all off with a doze of shimmer for that fresh, festive look.

The salon has plans of producing bi-annual editions of the Style Book, with the next one coming out this summer. The Holiday 2004 Style Book is available for Privé II Salon and Spa clients at the 2/L Westlife Place, 107 West Avenue, Quezon City. Call 3746846 and 3746847.

Out on a fashion limb for children

STEPFORD GIRL. Ala Paredes, in a printed black and white tube dress (P749) and black bead necklace and pendant (P199 a pair), and her young friends soak up the sun at Fuente Osmeña Park.

From page E1

board is composed of, among others, Jaime Zobel de Ayala, Emily Abrera, Jose Cuisia Jr., Ramon del Rosario, Bishop Socrates Villegas and Alexandra Prieto-Romualdez, PDI president.

Soft spot

Zobel de Ayala, CH national chair, couldn't have chosen a more ideal counterpart in Cebu. Being a parent himself, Liu has always had a soft spot for charities for needy children. He and his wife Alice have always been active in social projects, having imbibed the practice from his parents. It took him two months to finally say yes to head CH.

Eye-candy

But turnovers, in keeping with the Penshoppe spirit, need not be ho-hum affairs. Adding some eye candy to the event were well-scrubbed Club Pen 2005 models Cogie Domingo, Vince Cañizares, Ala Paredes, Dawn Balagot and Matteo Guidicelli. The gang of five gamely signed autographs, posed for pictures and appealed for more on-the-spot donations from mall goers.

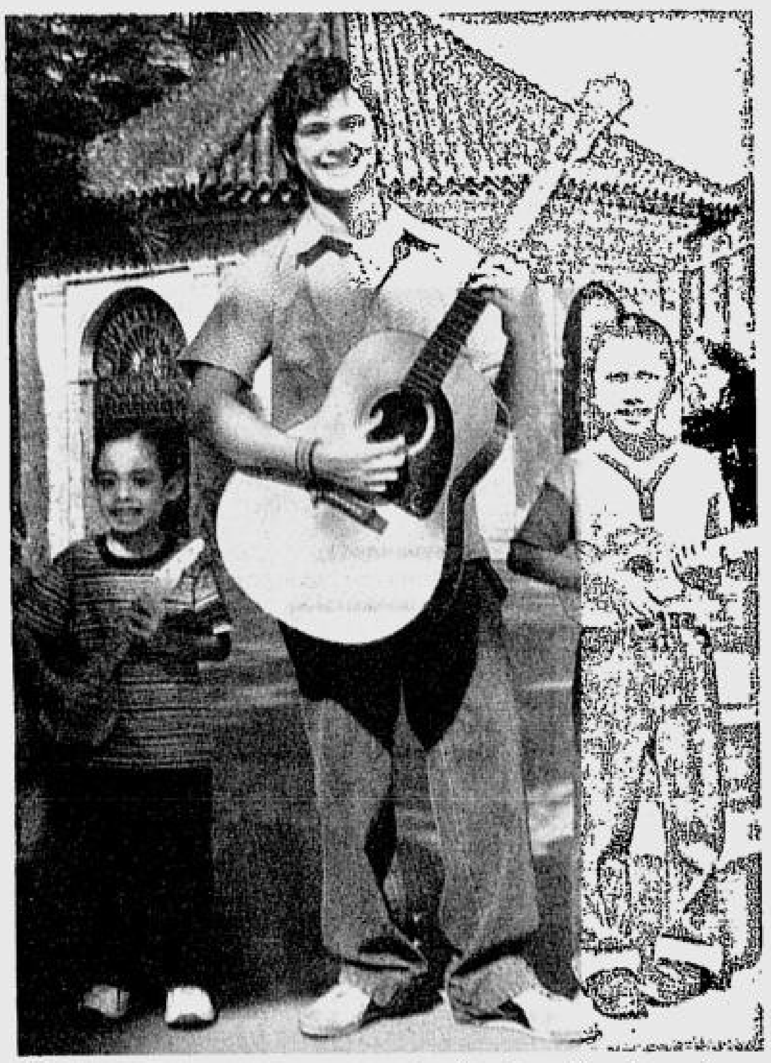
Except for Domingo, who had to go back to Manila on the same day to attend to show-biz commitments, the rest became the subject of a fashion shoot the next day featuring some of the brand's holiday wear. The models share the spotlight with children of Penshoppe employees based in the province.

In Liu's book, you can be wholesome and still be fashionable. This belief, among other core values such as being creative yet disciplined, performance-oriented yet family-centered, professional yet far from being a working stiff, has turned his 18-year-old company into a house of contradictions.

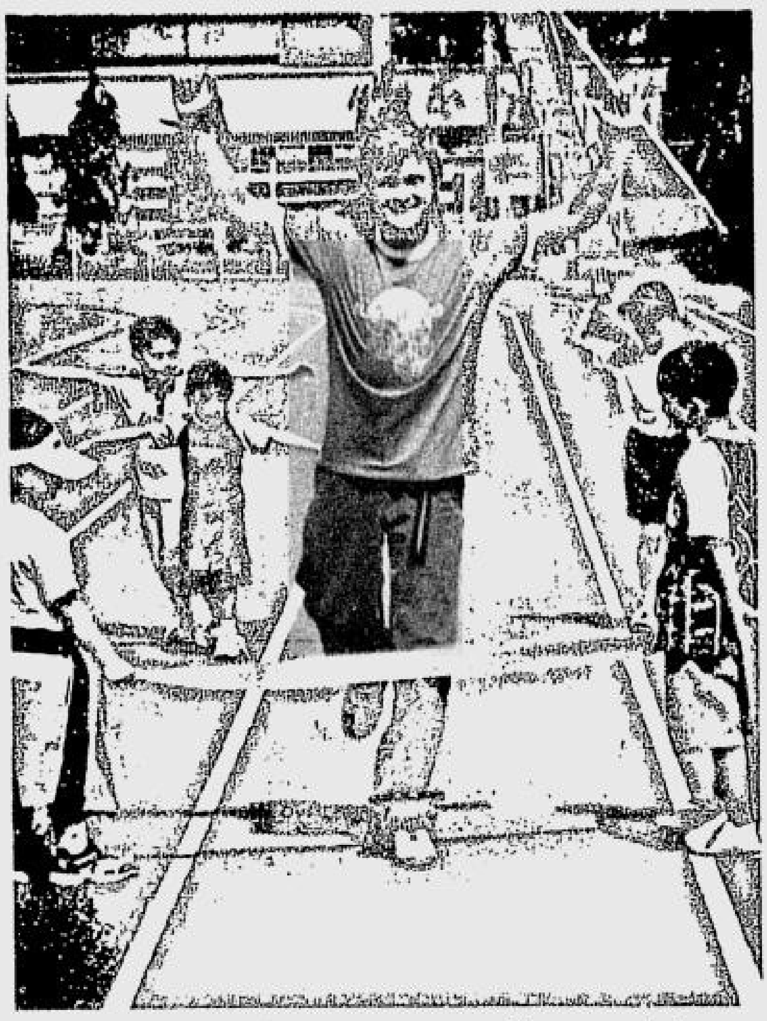
"It's important for me to inculcate these values," he says, "so that years from now the organization will conduct its affairs as its founders wanted it to be. We're here to make profits, but if in doing so we start to go against what we believe in, then *huwag na lang* (we'd rather stop)."

And part of Penshoppe and like-minded companies' investment in the future involves the needs of children today.

E-mail the author at avergara@inquirer.com.ph



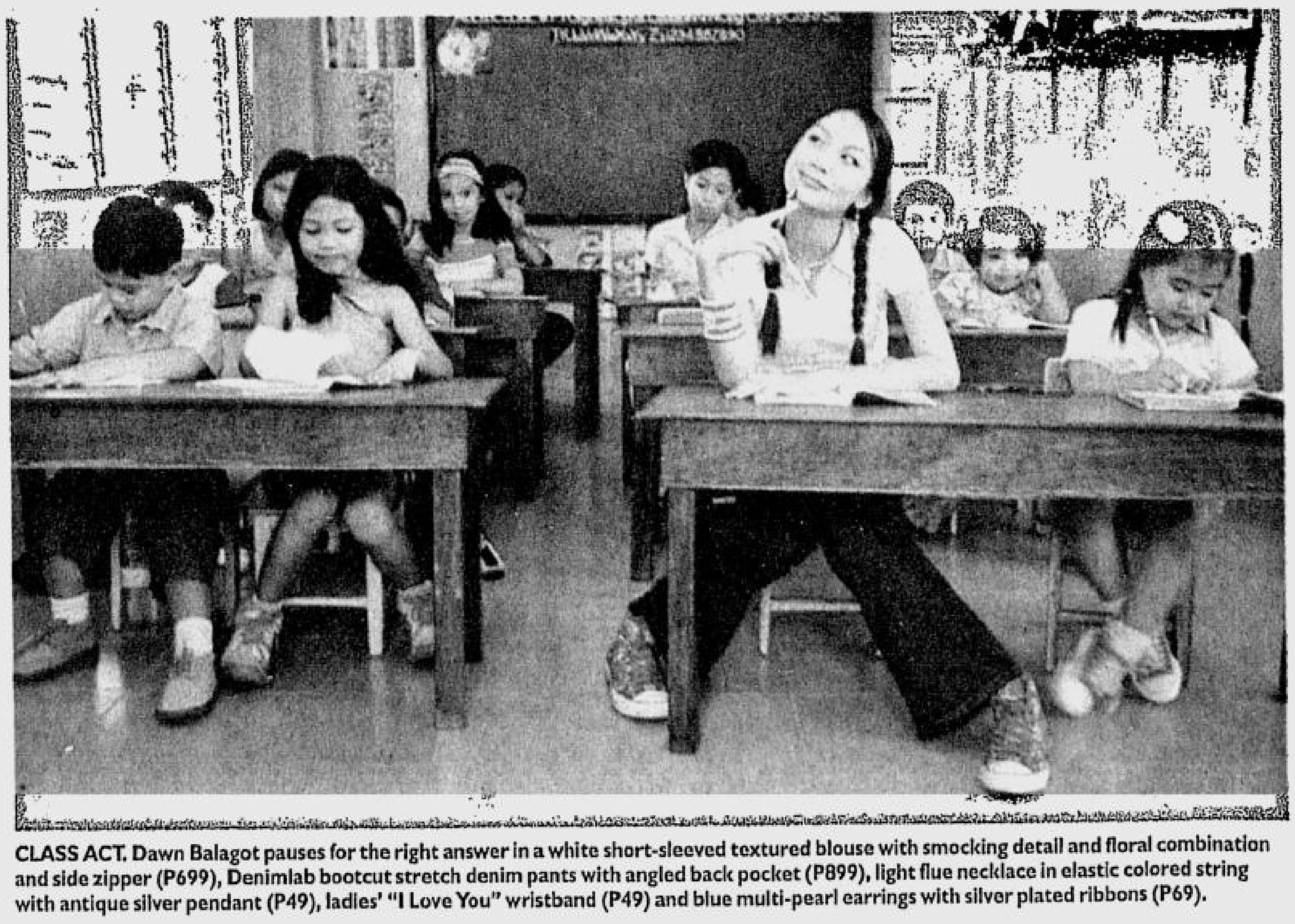
VISAYAN LOVE SONG. Matteo Guidecelli and two "bandmates" seem poised to serenade a special girl. He wears a blue men's short sleeve polo shirt (P799), Denimlab straight loose five-pocket jeans with light wash and sand-blast finish (P799) and khaki and moss green cuff in leather and twill (P349).



WINNER BY A MILE. Matteo wears an emerald green men's ringer tee (P369), Denimlab regular straight jeans with scrapping and stitch detail (P899) and black canvass belt with stripes and ring buckle (P249)

CLOTHES AND ACCESSORIES PENSHOPPE
HAIR AND MAKEUP: GARY SON
MODELS: VINCE CAÑIZARES, ALA PAREDES, DAWN BALAGOT AND MATTEO GUIDICELLI
SHOT ON LOCATION IN CEBU CITY
CHILDREN: ALEXIS MARGRET ABERION, LAURENCE LUKE RUIZ, LAURENCE LOIS RUIZ, JOSEFF CHAZ TECARRO, JOHN MICHAEL BACAYO, CHESKA MARIE ZAMORA-AÑOZA, SEAN JOSHUA RAMIREZ, SOPHIE THERESE PEPITO, KAYE TRICIA EMPUERTO, KYLE VINZ JET EMPUERTO, CYNIL TAM MARIE DELFIN, TUDOR LEE JOSEF TAN-BALBON, CASEY ENCLONA AND DIO MANGUBAT
SPECIAL THANKS TO THERESE GONZALEZ, RICKY BALLESTEROS, DELIA SABERON, JUN LAYAO, DANILO LATONIA AND MILAGROS SON

SHARE-A-COTTON. Vince Cañizares, in a slate blue men's ringer tee (P369), Denimlab regular straight basic 5-pocket jeans and whiskers (P949), helps himself to free cotton candy.



CLASS ACT. Dawn Balagot pauses for the right answer in a white short-sleeved textured blouse with smocking detail and floral combination and side zipper (P699), Denimlab bootcut stretch denim pants with angled back pocket (P899), light flue necklace in elastic colored string with antique silver pendant (P49), ladies' "I Love You" wristband (P49) and blue multi-pearl earrings with silver plated ribbons (P69).

Christmas is reaching above ourselves, and sharing our highest hopes and ideals with everyone.
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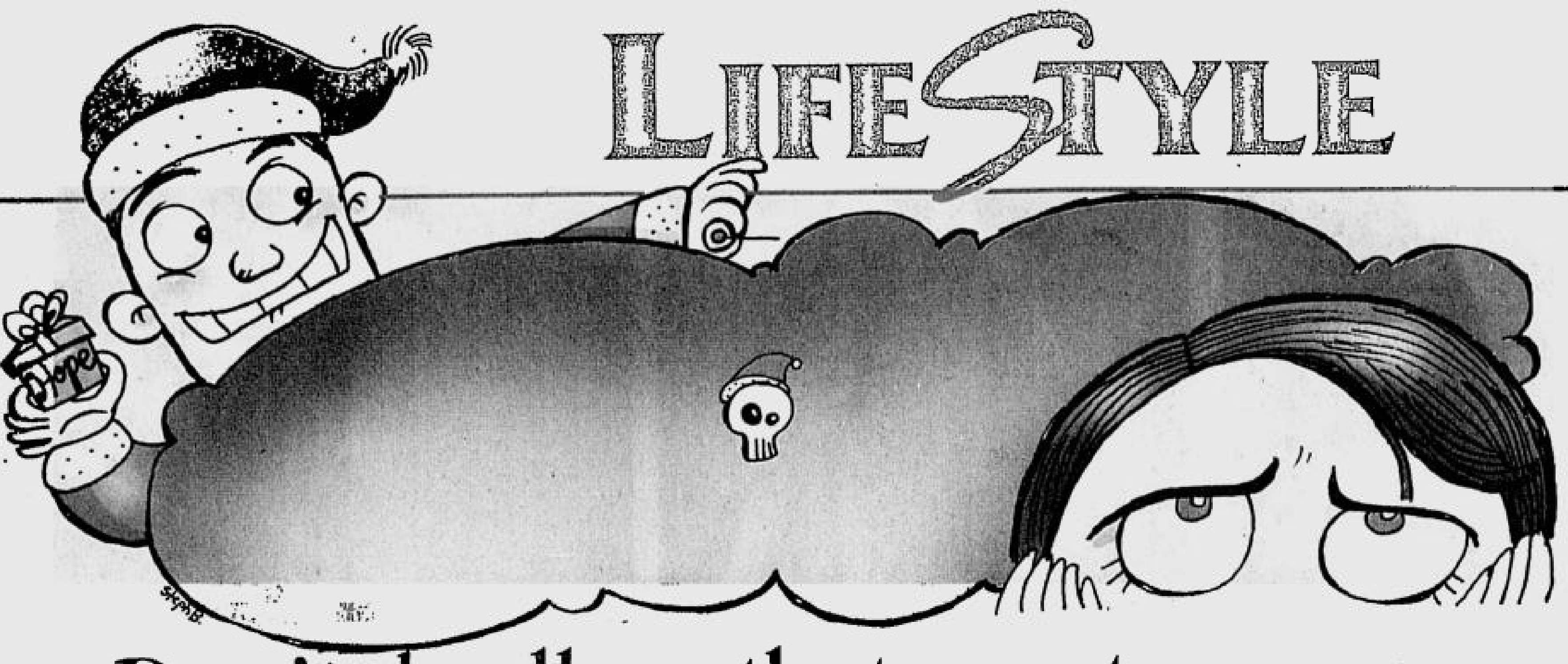

ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

Don't dwell on that empty space

> Never has the yearend seen the front and opinion pages mourning the loss of lives day after day, muting the sound of holiday celebration

LIFE-STYLED

Thelma Sioson San Juan

THIS is one Christmas where we must exert extra effort to find the joy of the season simply because death came one after the other. Never has the yearend seen the front and opinion pages mourning the loss of lives day after day, muting the sound of holiday celebration.

You're surrounded by the news of death near and far, and even of impending loss since you know of at least one relatively young person battling cancer in what must have seemed like an epidemic—no matter how ridiculous a cancer epidemic may sound.

It's a threatening reminder even to the hip and young. What's up with the planets?

Nothing perhaps, it's just the usual cycle. Yet you must steel your heart and keep your heart still so that you catch whatever it is life is trying to tell you. How do you cope with the loss, and how do you listen to its message?

By being quiet and attentive. It is ironic that the drift of the season is surviving the loss. The holiday mood is not euphoric, it is thoughtful and sober.

So how do you cope? No choice but to roll with the punches, so you can muster enough strength to get back on your feet and walk on. In fact,.there is no making up for a loss and it is foolhardy to think that an experience could be duplicated or a loved one replaced.

Our friend **Alya Honasan** even said as much of a dog when her Muffin (her name) died a few weeks ago. Accept and absorb the hurt and wear out the pain. After all, the heart—along with the rest of the body—gets fatigued from hurting.

Then—seize a new moment and live it. The cliché is true, we're just passing by, experiencing moments and people along the way, but never really owning them indefinitely. We can't even retrace our step—that happens only in the mind. There's only the forward motion where time is concerned.

You can't go back, but you can move on. Muster the faith to see only the fullness of the moment, not its emptiness. Don't dwell on that empty space.

Christmas, therefore, is seizing the moment and living it as if it were a blessing, because it is. Let your every moment be an answered prayer. Merry Christmas!

We have a few friends to whom Christmas is an answered prayer. **PJ** and **Suyin Enriquez**, for instance, are the new parents of a beautiful girl named **Justine Francesca**; our executive assistant **Rina Lareza** and husband **Sandy** have a baby boy, **Zechariah**. We share their joy.

Love hurts

Talk about moving on, Studio 23's and BBC Lounge's **Edge Pamute** has a constructive way of healing a broken heart. He's compiled the year's love hurt(s) into a CD. He said that's his way of expressing an otherwise inexpressible feeling.

The result is a classy mix of broken and nu-jazz beats, brasil, bossanova and other sounds still to be played in Manila's clubs; Edge brought them fresh from Paris.

The compilation is dubbed Metro Lounge, the Christmas gift of Metro Magazine to friends and creative collaborators. It is, by turns, upbeat and rhythmic, instrumental and jazzy, melancholic and romantic—an invigorating succession of beats and feelings. When you listen to it, remember it is Edge's romantic journey.

Out-of-town dining

This long holiday break, pump up your weary mind and soul by driving out of the city. There are many places to dine in, chill out, or simply enjoy a change of scenery.

In San Pablo, Laguna, **Tito** and **Patis Tesoro** have opened their quaint home and garden to diners who know only too well what the Tesoro kitchen could whip up, specifically Chef **Paul Poblador** who's married to **Nina Tesoro**.

As many know, Chef Paul first gained a following at Salud Bistro in Baguio. These days, Chef Paul's cuisine is only a short drive away. This time, instead of Asian-Continental specialties, he's doing native favorites.

The day we went there, they served *humba*, organic chicken *inasal*, *ginataang sitaw* and *kalabasa*, among other classics. In this new dining place called Cucina Salud, Chef Paul uses organic food.

Tito and Patis' house is a visual feast in itself, with its intricate antique woodwork, chunks of which were taken from three old houses. It is so Patis—a rich tapestry of architecture, home furnishings and bric-a-brac culled from a lifetime of thriving interests in Filipiniana and culture.

Diners can even meander to the Tesoros' lush garden which Patis has developed the past 15 years using organic fertilizer. With its black bamboo, fruit trees and flowers, the garden assumes a rich character.

Dining at the Tesoros' Cucina Salud is like eating and lazing around in an old Filipino home, with the tables set up at quiet breezy corners. It had been inaccessible to the public until now, with Cucina Salud's opening.

While in the house, you can also shop for artworks by Quezon artists or the print collection of former Dutch Ambassador **Theo Arnold**, who settled down in Quezon. We found **Carlito Ortega**'s wood sculpture simply irresistible and bought a table centerpiece that combines wood and glass to display flowers and candles. Ortega's sculptures make a good counterpoint in minimalist interiors.

Ortega's studio is one of the culture stops in Quezon which the Tesoros and **Ado Escudero** are helping develop. What they have is a culture-lifestyle map that offers enough varied attractions to make it worth the drive to the south.

Apart from Cucina Salud, there's the **Ugu Bigyan** pottery workshop with café, **Jay Herrera**'s Café Kinabuhayan for Mt. Banahaw trekkers and, of course, Villa Escudero where Ado Escudero can show friends around his relatively new vast home, with its incredible living room which is like a slice of a football field. It contains his motley collections of religious antiques and art pieces covering popular faiths—*santos*, buddhas, Hindu gods, among others.

Since weekenders started the habit of hopping out of town for good eats, private dining places have popped out in Tagaytay. It now has Seasons, the popular resto of the **Calalangs**.

Artist **Popo San Pascual** is also opening the family home to diners who'd like to enjoy the home-cooked dishes of Popo's mom **Marina**—*paella*, roast beef, *ginataang* ox tongue, chicken liver pate. The house sits in the San Pascuals' vast garden Popo and brother **Thady** are calling the place Marina. It's in Mendez Crossing, behind Bag of Beans. Call 09184139670.

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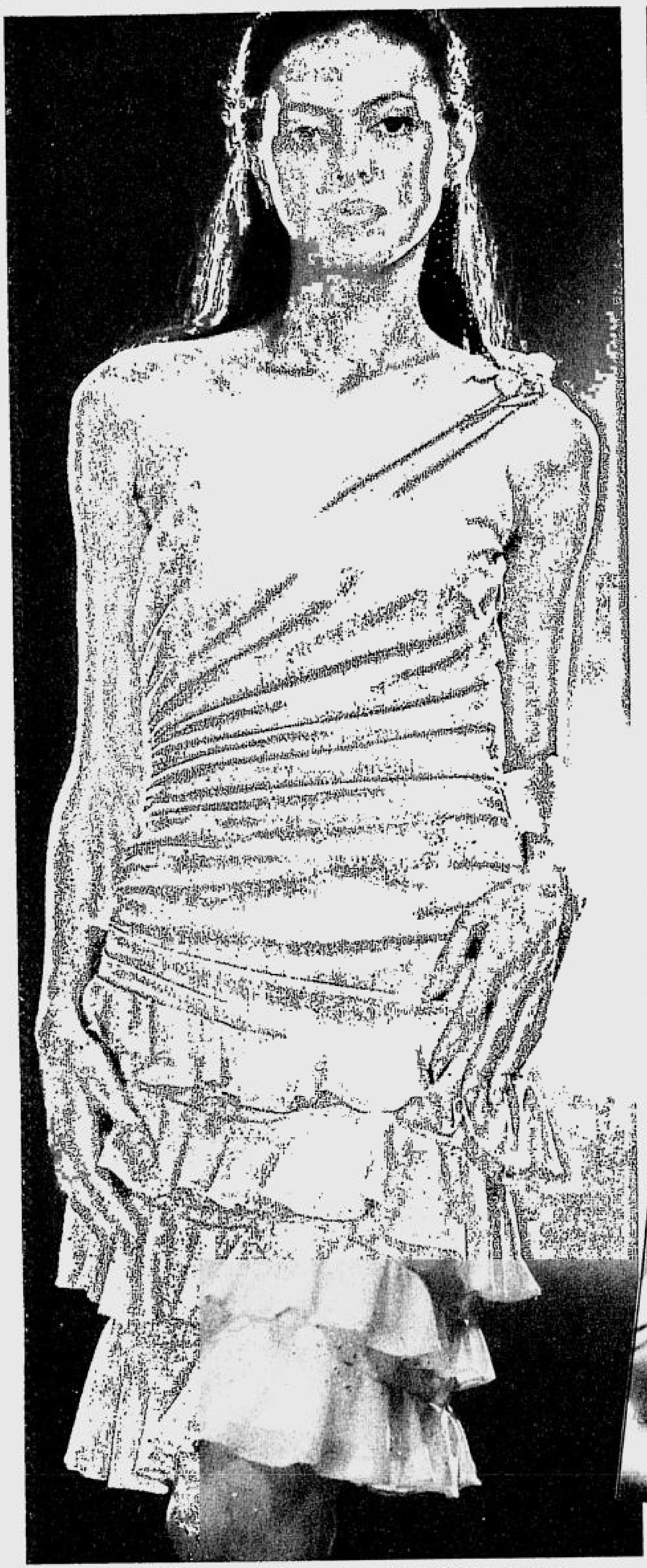


GLAM AND GLITZ. Asymmetrical jersey dress with ruching and layered pleated skirt

RUCHED cocktail dress with ruffled layered skirt accented with flowing tendril straps

HALTER jersey dress with glitz accents and rhinestones crisscross back detailing

Off-the-rack lays on the holiday charm

V-NECK haltered glitzy dress detailed with ruched waist and ruffled layered skirt

EXPECT to make a grand entrance when you wear one of Efren Ocampo's holiday clothes from the SM Boutique Square this season.

Ocampo, long known for his line of ready-to-wear evening clothes, has prepared a collection that is feminine and romantic. Beige—with a rainbow glitz effect—is his new black in lighter-than-air materials like chiffon and jersey, and, of course, luxe lace.

His collection is inspired by the fashion of the 1920s and 1930s—think flapper and Chicago—"with the swinging skirt, low torso and soft fabric."

The "O factor" comes out in one-sided shoulder dresses, asymmetrical hemlines and uneven hemmed skirts, as well as romantic details like ruffles and layering.

Completing the look of elegance and sophistication are a sprinkling of rhinestones, a shower of sequins and delicate beadwork. The Efren Ocampo collection is available at the SM Boutique Square.

V-NECK spaghetti-strap dress with sequin shower on the bodice. Pleated uneven hemline gives the dress a more feminine appeal.

Men with an attitude

THE GODFATHER. White long-sleeved polo (P699.75) with matching necktie (P325), navy blue wrinkle-free pants (P895.75) and suspenders

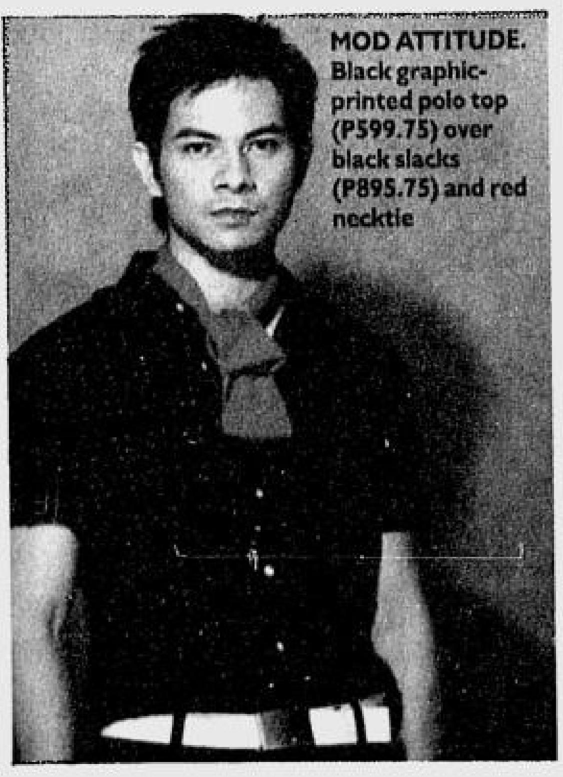
THE ATTITUDES collection includes clothes in classic colors with a tailored, clean look. The soft look revolves around lightweight materials like cotton and wool.

The shirt jacket makes a refreshing option to the staple business suit. Matched with a light-colored dress shirt and tie, it makes for casual office chic.

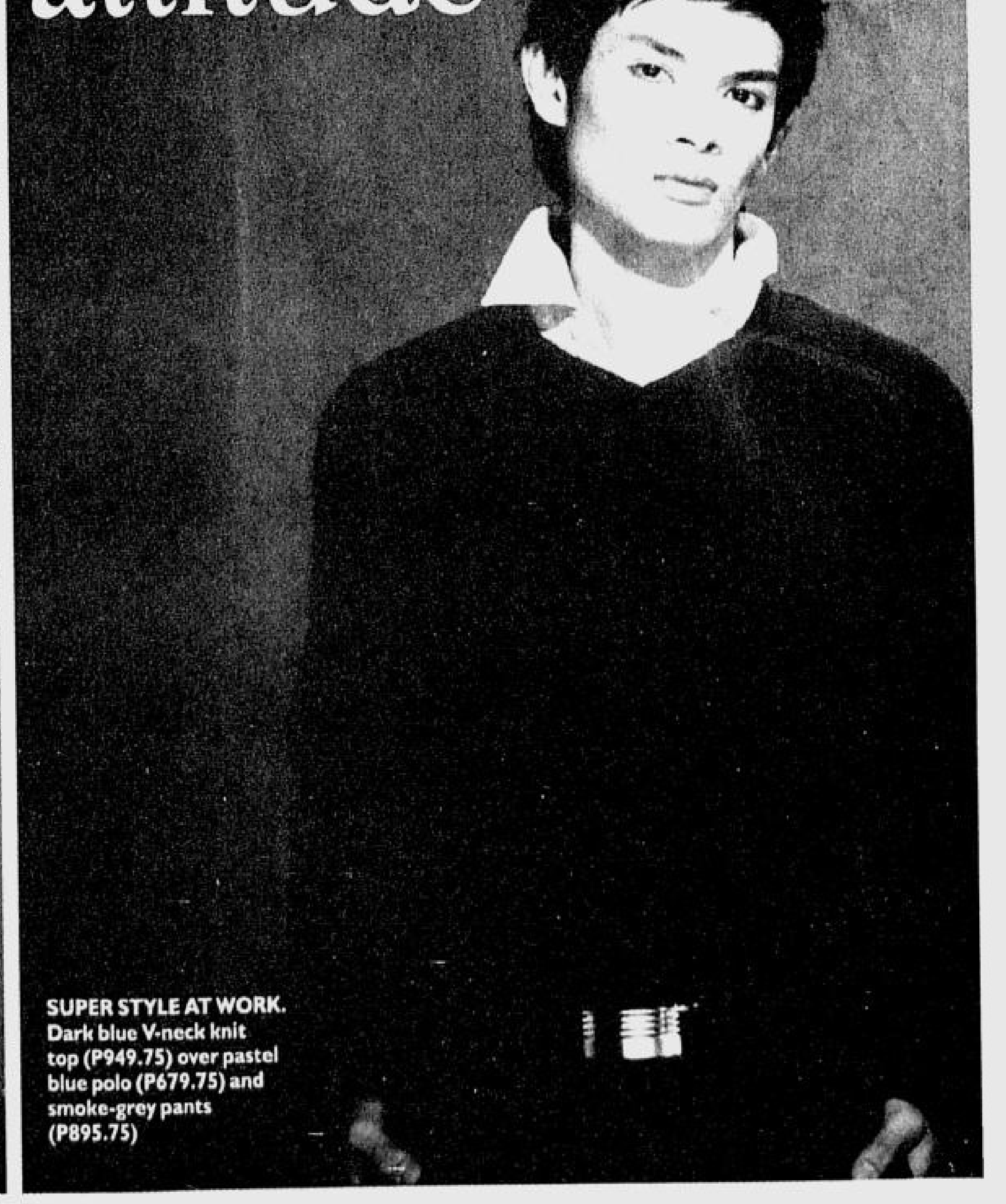
Knit shirts and sweaters layered atop a polo also serve as another style fix. Tailored knits offer color and breathing room.

For a more casual daytime note, there are light-colored knit shirts, striped polos and chinos. They can be paired with a jacket. Stylized printed dress shirts in full or three-fourth sleeves can be mixed with funky belts.

Attitudes is available at SM Department Stores, Landmark, Crossings, Ever, Cinderella, and Attitudes boutiques at Filinvest Mall and Virra Mall Greenhills.



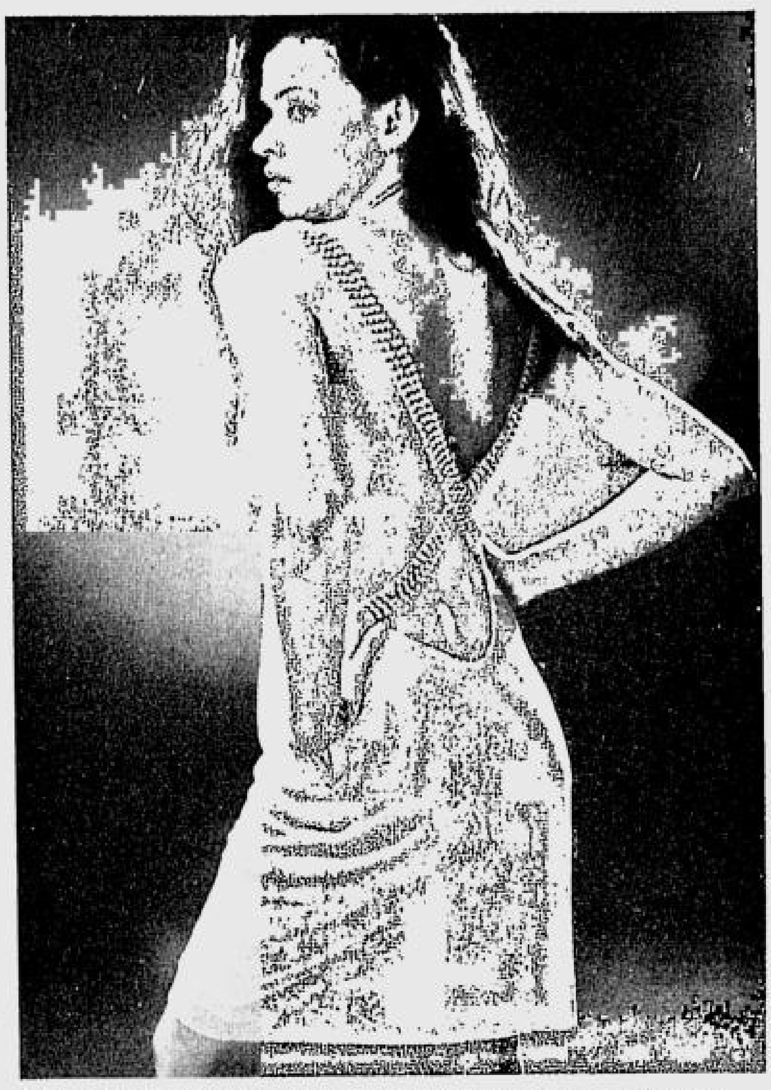
MOD ATTITUDE. Black graphic-printed polo top (P599.75) over black slacks (P895.75) and red necktie



SUPER STYLE AT WORK. Dark blue V-neck knit top (P949.75) over pastel blue polo (P679.75) and smoke-grey pants (P895.75)

GLAM AND GLITZ. Asymmetrical jersey dress with ruching and layered pleated skirt

RUCHED cocktail dress with ruffled layered skirt accented with flowing tendril straps



HALTER jersey dress with glitz accents and rhinestones crisscross back detailing

Off-the-rack lays on the holiday charm

EXPECT to make a grand entrance when you wear one of Efren Ocampo's holiday clothes from the SM Boutique Square this season.

Ocampo, long known for his line of ready-to-wear evening clothes, has prepared a collection that is feminine and romantic. Beige—with a rainbow glitz effect—is his new black in lighter-than-air materials like chiffon and jersey, and, of course, luxe lace.

His collection is inspired by the fashion of the 1920s and 1930s—think flapper and Chicago—"with the swinging skirt, low torso and soft fabric."

The "O factor" comes out in one-sided shoulder dresses, asymmetrical hemlines and uneven hemmed skirts, as well as romantic details like ruffles and layering.

Completing the look of elegance and sophistication are a sprinkling of rhinestones, a shower of sequins and delicate beadwork. The Efren Ocampo collection is available at the SM Boutique Square.

V-NECK haltered glitzy dress detailed with ruched waist and ruffled layered skirt

V-NECK spaghetti-strap dress with sequin shower on the bodice. Pleated uneven hemline gives the dress a more feminine appeal.

Men with an attitude

THE ATTITUDES collection includes clothes in classic colors with a tailored, clean look. The soft look revolves around lightweight materials like cotton and wool.

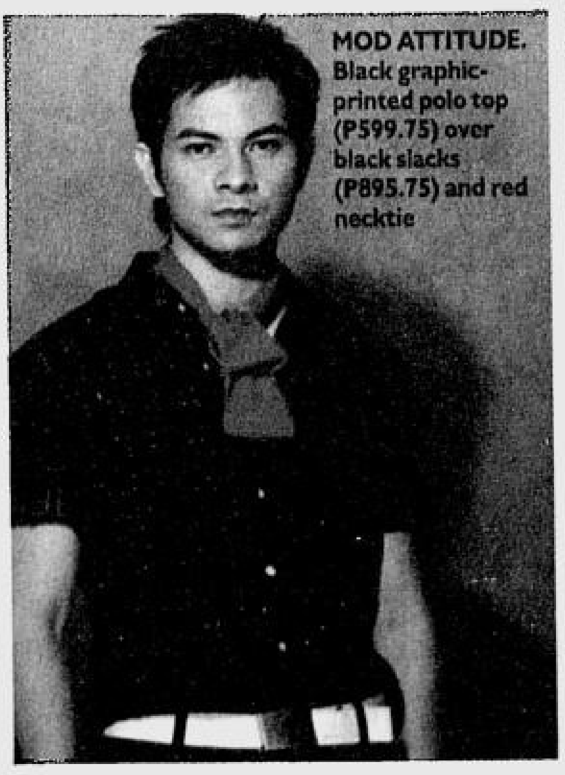
The shirt jacket makes a refreshing option to the staple business suit. Matched with a light-colored dress shirt and tie, it makes for casual office chic.

Knit shirts and sweaters layered atop a polo also serve as another style fix. Tailored knits offer color and breathing room.

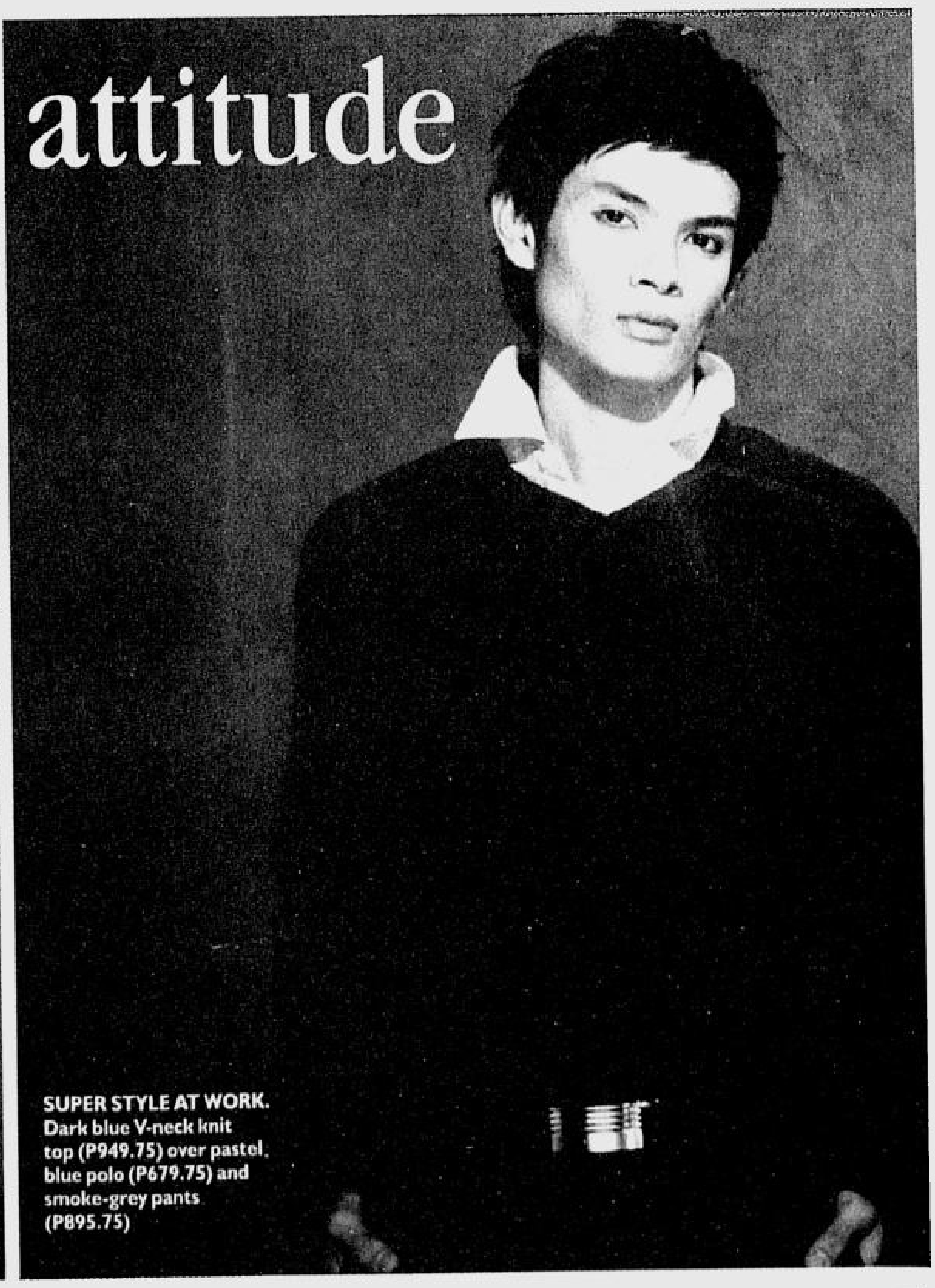
For a more casual daytime note, there are light-colored knit shirts, striped polos and chinos. They can be paired with a jacket. Stylized printed dress shirts in full or three-fourth sleeves can be mixed with funky belts.

Attitudes is available at SM Department Stores, Landmark, Crossings, Ever, Cinderella, and Attitudes boutiques at Filinvest Mall and Virra Mall Greenhills.

THE GODFATHER. White long-sleeved polo (P699.75) with matching necktie (P325), navy blue wrinkle-free pants (P895.75) and suspenders



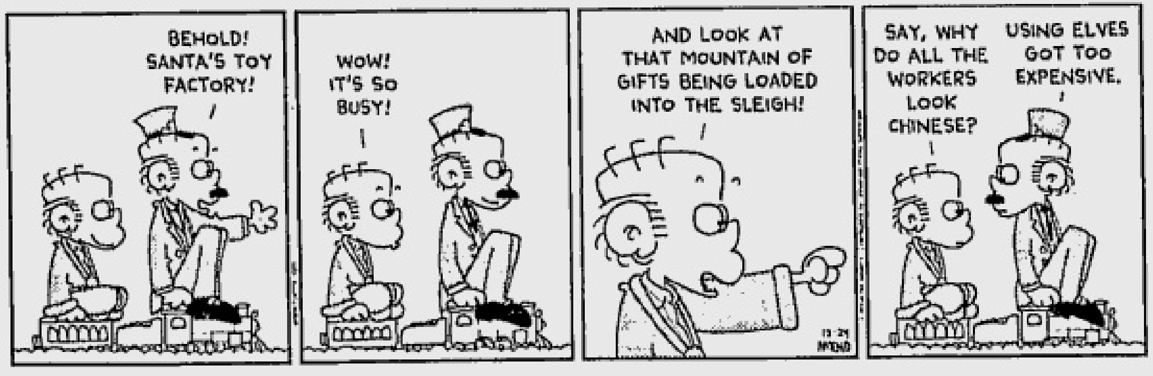
MOD ATTITUDE. Black graphic-printed polo top (P599.75) over black slacks (P895.75) and red necktie



SUPER STYLE AT WORK. Dark blue V-neck knit top (P949.75) over pastel blue polo (P679.75) and smoke-grey pants (P895.75)

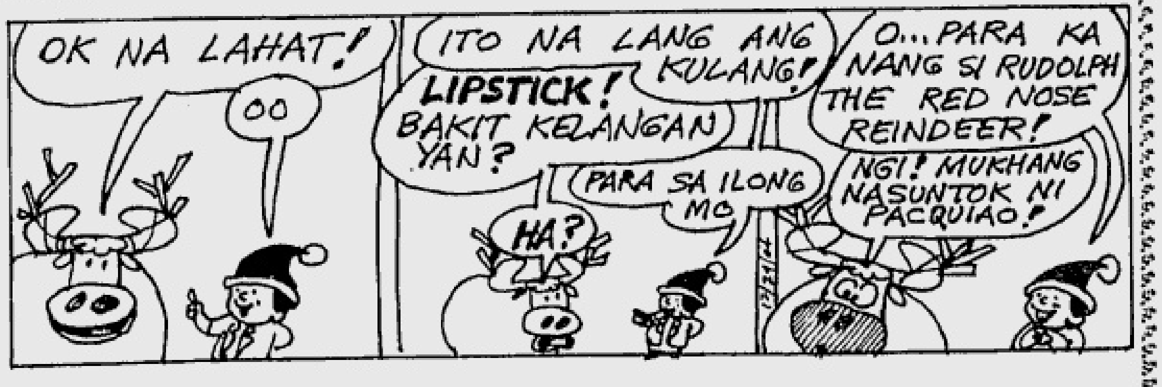
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


BEHOLD! SANTA'S TOY FACTORY!
WOW! IT'S SO BUSY!
AND LOOK AT THAT MOUNTAIN OF GIFTS BEING LOADED INTO THE SLEIGH!
12-24 AMEND
SAY, WHY DO ALL THE WORKERS LOOK CHINESE?
USING ELVES GOT TOO EXPENSIVE.

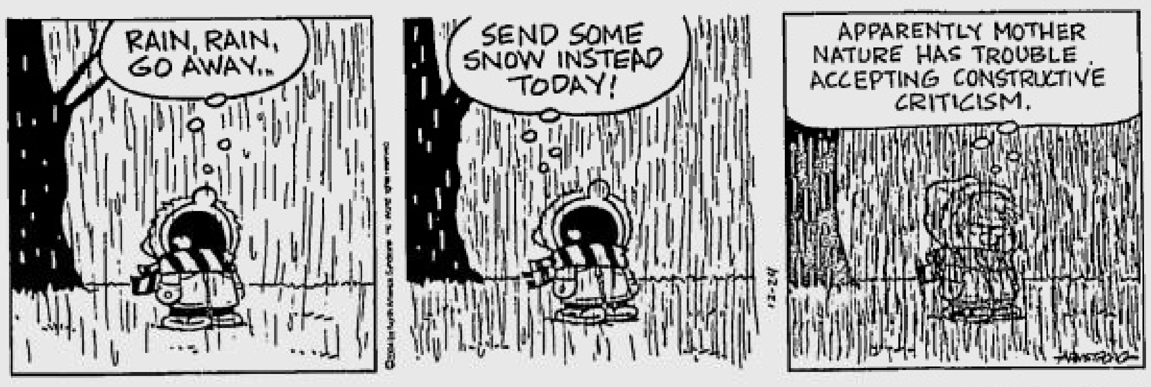
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


OK NA LAHAT!
OO
ITO NA LANG ANG KULANG!
LIPSTICK! BAKIT KELANGAN YAN?
HA?
PARA SA ILONG MO
O...PARA KA NANG SI RUDOLPH THE RED NOSE REINDEER!
NGI! MUKHANG NASUNTOK NI PACQUIAO!

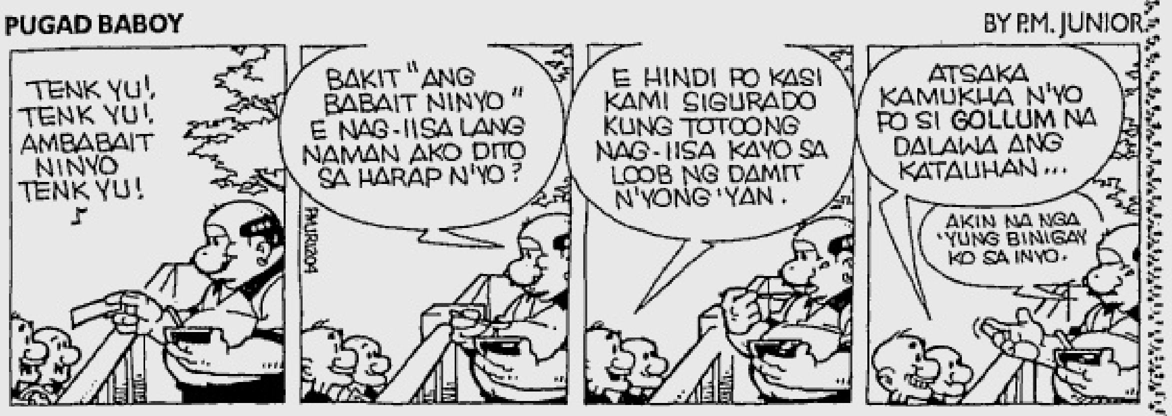
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


RAIN, RAIN, GO AWAY..
SEND SOME SNOW INSTEAD TODAY!
12-24
APPARENTLY MOTHER NATURE HAS TROUBLE ACCEPTING CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM.

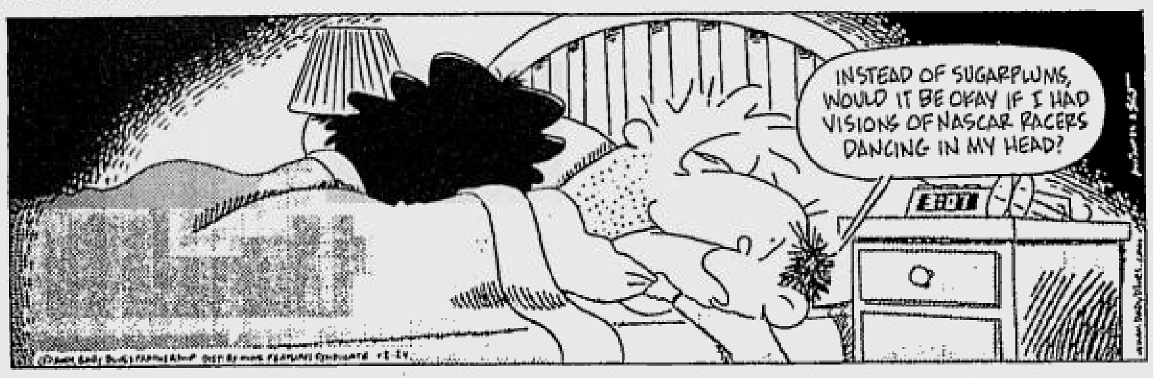
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


TENK YU!, TENK YU!, AMBABAIT NINYO TENK YU!
BAKIT "ANG BABAIT NINYO" E NAG-IISA LANG NAMAN AKO DITO SA HARAP N'YO?
E HINDI PO KASI KAMI SIGURADO KUNG TOTOONG NAG-IISA KAYO SA LOOB NG DAMIT N'YONG 'YAN.
ATSAKA KAMUKHA N'YO PO SI GOLLUM NA DALAWA ANG KATAUHAN...
AKIN NA NGA 'YUNG BINIGAY KO SA INYO.

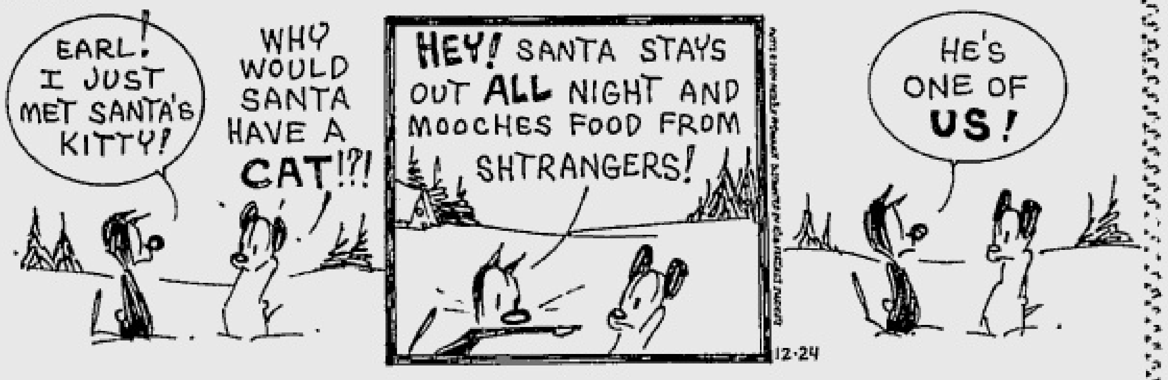
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


INSTEAD OF SUGARPLUMS, WOULD IT BE OKAY IF I HAD VISIONS OF NASCAR RACERS DANCING IN MY HEAD?

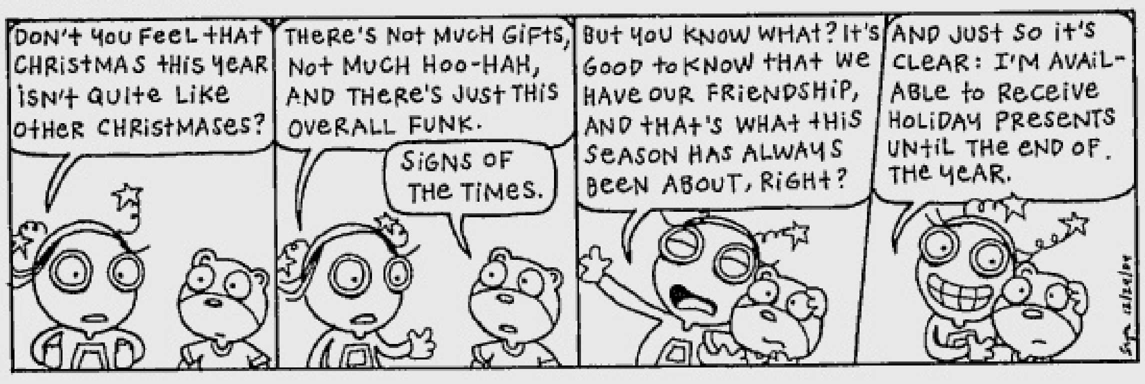
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


EARL! I JUST MET SANTA'S KITTY!
WHY WOULD SANTA HAVE A CAT!?!
HEY! SANTA STAYS OUT ALL NIGHT AND MOOCHES FOOD FROM SHTRANGERS!
HE'S ONE OF US!
12·24

ATOMO AND WEBOY

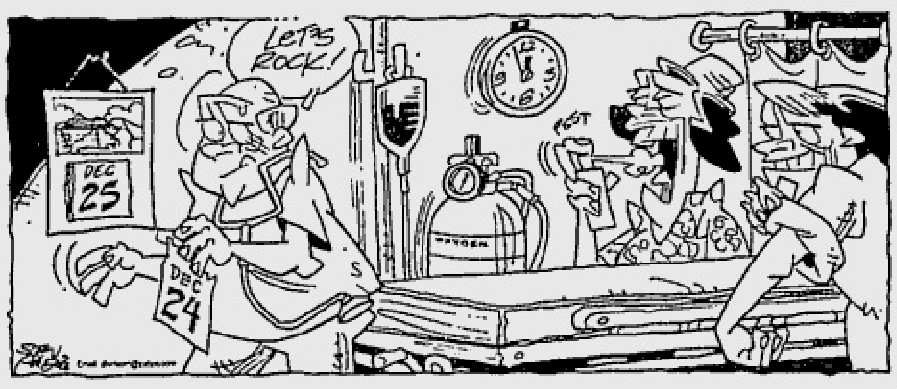
BY LYRA GARCELLANO


DON'T YOU FEEL THAT CHRISTMAS THIS YEAR ISN'T QUITE LIKE OTHER CHRISTMASES?
THERE'S NOT MUCH GIFTS, NOT MUCH HOO-HAH, AND THERE'S JUST THIS OVERALL FUNK.
SIGNS OF THE TIMES.
BUT YOU KNOW WHAT? IT'S GOOD TO KNOW THAT WE HAVE OUR FRIENDSHIP, AND THAT'S WHAT THIS SEASON HAS ALWAYS BEEN ABOUT, RIGHT?
AND JUST SO IT'S CLEAR: I'M AVAILABLE TO RECEIVE HOLIDAY PRESENTS UNTIL THE END OF THE YEAR.

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS

**NAKAHANDA
NA PO ANG
EMERGENCY
ROOM SA
HEART CENTER
PARA SA
MAGDADAGSAANG
MGA PASYENTE
PAGKATAPOS
NG NOCHE BUENA**


LET'S ROCK!
DEC 25
DEC 24
PSST

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You have unusual, bold ideas. Generally, you can implement them because you are very organized. You are also resourceful. Many of you have psychic abilities (you're certainly intuitive). You often master special techniques. Others are attracted to you because they sense your love of adventure. Increased solitude this year will give you an opportunity to learn something important.
Birthdate of: Ricky Martin, singer; Howard Hughes, eccentric billionaire; Mary Higgins Clark, writer.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Parents, bosses and authority figures surprise you today. Take nothing for granted. In turn, you might surprise others. Either way, expect the unexpected.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You can make a wonderful inner leap today in terms of your beliefs. You might meet an unusual teacher or learn something about a different culture that is meaningful to you.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Unexpected gifts and favors might come your way today. Someone close to you could receive a bonus or advantage that benefits you as well.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You feel bold and independent in all your relationships with others, especially the general public. All your exchanges are quite exciting and unusual today.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Your daily routine at work is interrupted today. It is definitely unusual in some way. But these interruptions are exciting, because they broaden your world in some new, fresh way.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Exciting, unexpected romance is a strong possibility for many of you today. Party invitations and opportunities for vacations or pleasant social occasions abound!

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Someone at home will surprise you today. It might be a family member, or it could be someone who visits you unexpectedly. Family gatherings are upbeat and exciting as well.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You're full of bright, new, unusual ideas today. Expect to meet new faces and fascinating people. Something different makes this day a bit unusual.

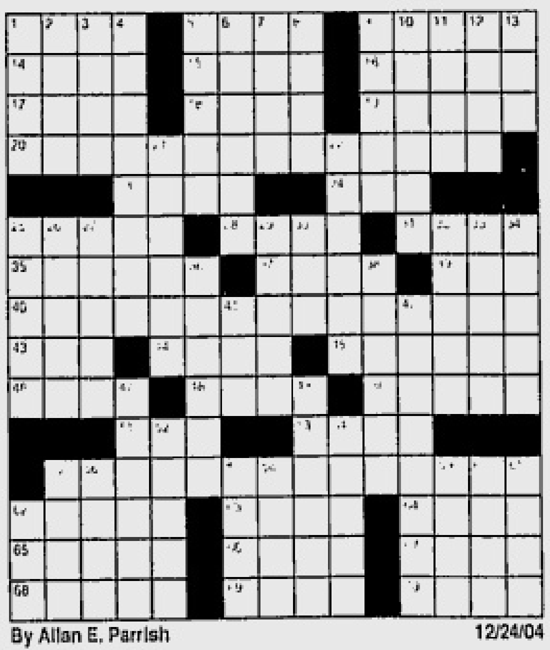
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Money flies from your fingers today with spontaneous purchases and unexpected expenditures. You might also earn money in an unusual way. Keep your wits about you, because things happen fast today.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You feel bold, adventurous and independent today. You might dress in a different way. You certainly are relating to others in a way that is different from your usual style.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Dealings with governments and large institutions, like prisons and hospitals, are a source of some surprise for you today. A shocking secret might come your way as well.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): A friend will probably surprise you today. This person will either do something unusual or introduce someone who is bizarre. Either way, stay on your toes!

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Allan E. Parrish
Mentor, OH

12/24/04

ACROSS
1 Breakfast staple
5 Book before Obadiah
9 M. Keaton film
14 Chilly and wet
15 High-grade cotton
16 Holding the lead
17 Jai follower?
18 Thickening agent
19 Strong cravings
20 Seasonal greeting
23 Get together
24 Entertainer Calloway
25 Sean of "The Lord of the Rings"
28 Hindu discipline
31 Economist Smith
35 Brutes
37 Aloe __
39 Old French coin
40 Seasonal trade
43 Golfer's box
44 Rise rapidly
45 Gullible person
46 Mach+ jets
48 Makes up one's mind
50 Cartoonist Tex
51 Angel dust: abbr.
53 Let up
55 Seasonal visitor
62 Nintendo hero
63 Frail
64 Lacquerware
65 Bakery boxes
66 Tahoe or Huron
67 Was in debt to
68 Cheap jewelry
69 "Rich Man, Poor Man" writer
70 St. Louis squad

DOWN
1 Dutch cheese
2 Nor'easter
3 Growl
4 Brief encounter
5 Without delay
6 Powerful
7 Actor Sharif
8 Hindu attire
9 Island nation since 1964
10 Cuban dance: var.
11 __ Verde National Park
12 Feedbag feed
13 ER personnel
21 Busybodies
22 Wolfs down
25 Aids a criminal
26 Male and female
27 Be silent, in music
29 In plain view
30 Pres. Bush or Washington
32 "Moll Flanders" writer
33 Stage performer
34 Like some perfumes
36 "Peanuts" dog
38 Appalled
41 Disparity
42 Originator
47 Broken-bone support
49 "Calendar Girl" singer
52 Not far off
54 Out of kilter
55 Coffee, slangily
56 Raw minerals
57 Temple athletes
58 Jacob's first wife
59 Keokuk's state
60 Red's Kadiddlehopper
61 Sneaker brand
62 Disorderly hair

Thursday's Puzzle Solved

E	L	A	M	■	V	O	L	T	■	S	T	A	I	R
L	A	L	A	■	A	L	A	H	■	P	O	L	K	A
O	T	I	S	■	L	E	S	E	■	I	N	L	E	T
P	I	G	S	M	I	G	H	T	F	L	Y	■	■	■
E	N	N	E	A	D	■	■	S	A	L	■	K	G	B
■	■	■	S	T	A	H	L	■	D	A	H	N	E	R
A	L	S	■	■	T	A	M	P	■	G	E	E	N	A
B	U	T	H	T	E	Y	M	A	K	E	V	E	R	Y
A	R	O	A	R	■	S	A	R	I	■	■	D	E	S
S	E	R	E	I	N	■	S	E	N	N	A	■	■	■
E	X	E	■	B	A	L	■	■	G	O	L	D	I	E
■	■	■	D	U	B	I	O	U	S	B	I	R	D	S
A	A	R	O	N	■	F	I	R	M	■	C	U	E	S
P	R	O	S	E	■	E	L	S	E	■	E	S	S	E
R	A	C	E	S	■	R	Y	A	N	■	S	E	T	S

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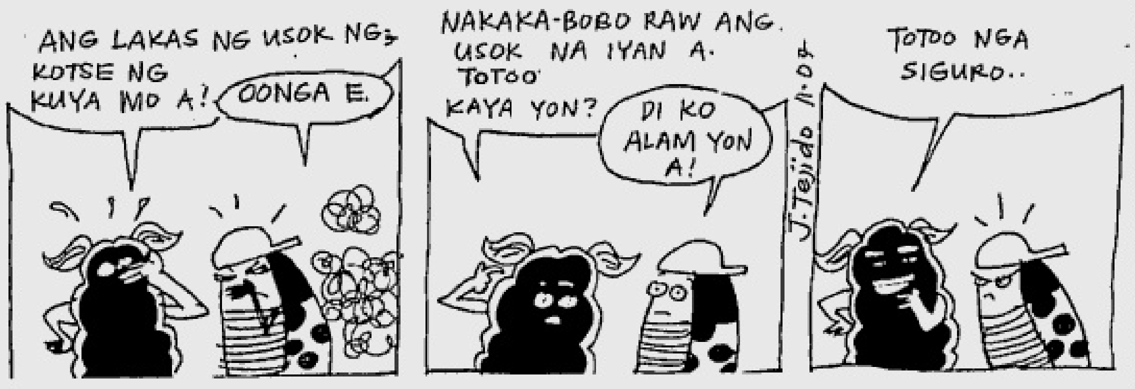
12/23/04

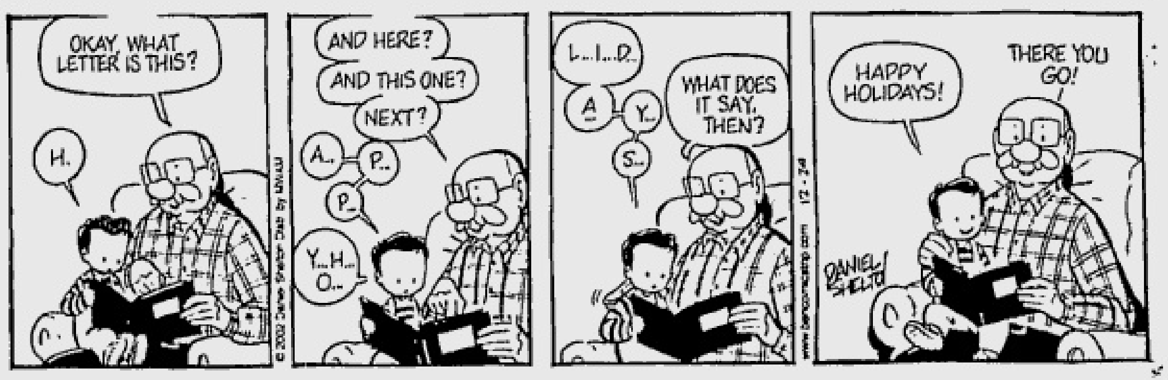
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


ANG LAKAS NG USOK NG KOTSE NG KUYA MO A!
OONGA E.
NAKAKA-BOBO RAW ANG USOK NA IYAN A. TOTOO KAYA YON?
DI KO ALAM YON A!
J. Tejido 11-04
TOTOO NGA SIGURO..

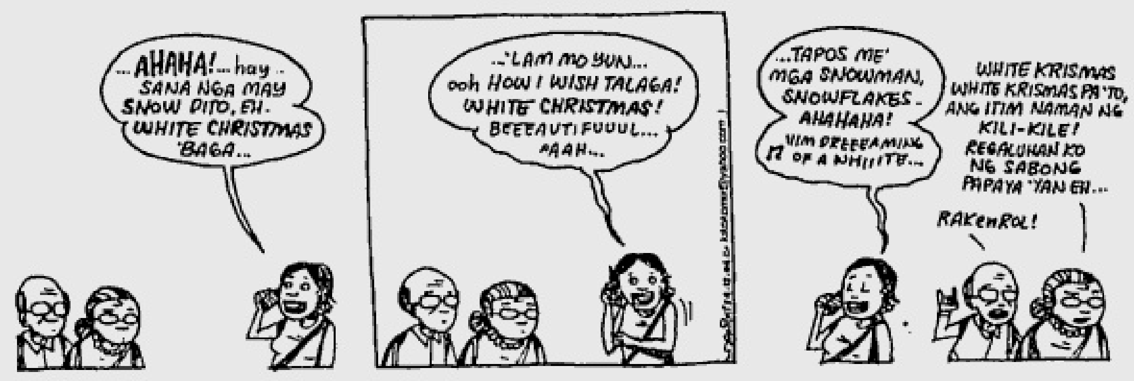
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


OKAY, WHAT LETTER IS THIS?
H.
AND HERE?
AND THIS ONE?
NEXT?
A.. P.. P..
Y..H.. O..
L...I...D..
A. Y.. S..
WHAT DOES IT SAY, THEN?
HAPPY HOLIDAYS!
THERE YOU GO!
DANIEL SHELTON

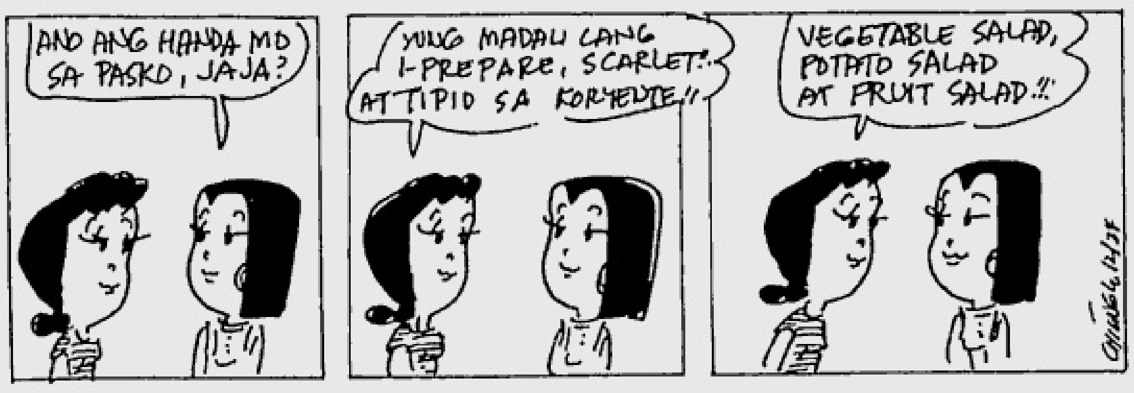
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


...AHAHA!... hay.. SANA NGA MAY SNOW DITO, EH. WHITE CHRISTMAS BAGA...
...'LAM MO YUN... ooh HOW I WISH TALAGA! WHITE CHRISTMAS! BEEEAUTIFUUUL... AAAH...
...TAPOS ME' MGA SNOWMAN, SNOWFLAKES.. AHAHAHA! ♫ I'M DREEEAMING OF A WHIIITE...
WHITE KRISMAS WHITE KRISMAS PA 'TO, ANG ITIM NAMAN NG KILI-KILI! REGALUHAN KO NG SABONG PAPAYA 'YAN EH...
RAKENROL!

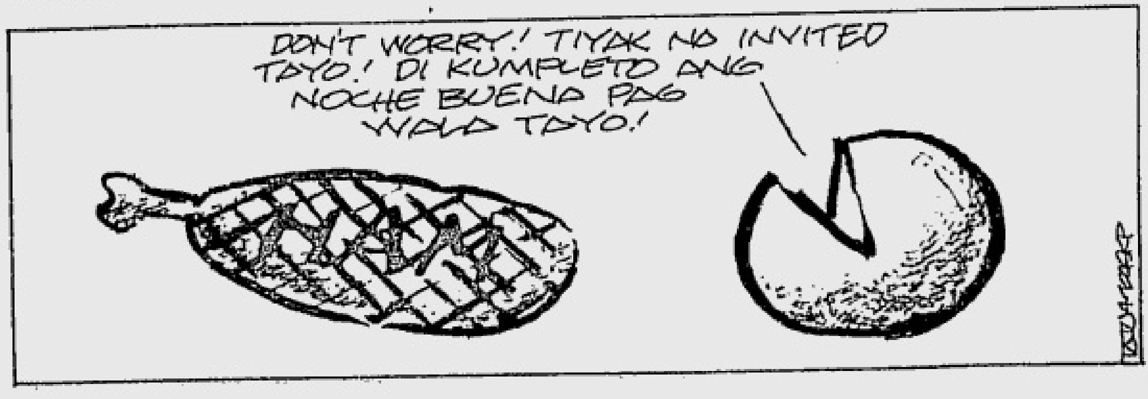
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

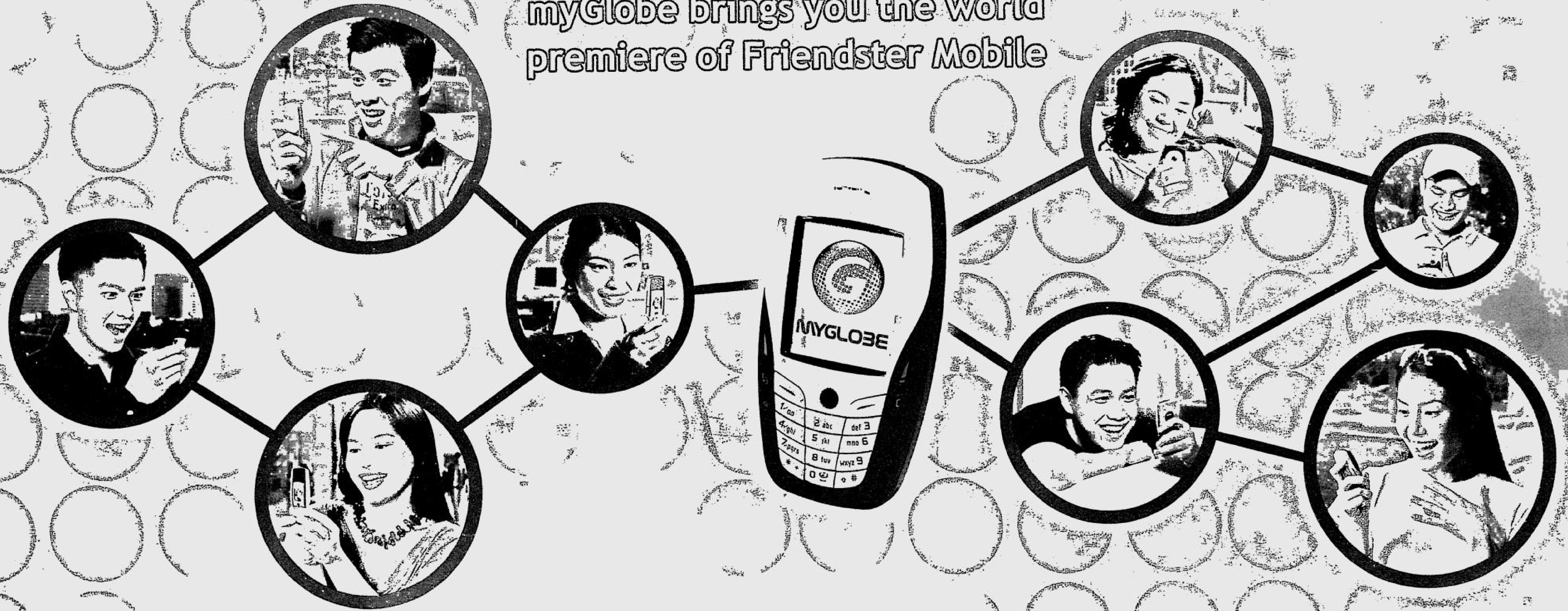

AND ANG HANDA MO SA PASKO, JAJA?
YUNG MADALI LANG I-PREPARE, SCARLET! AT TIPID SA KORYENTE!!
VEGETABLE SALAD, POTATO SALAD AT FRUIT SALAD!!

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


DON'T WORRY! TIYAK NA INVITED TAYO! DI KUMPLETO ANG NOCHE BUENA PAG WALA TAYO!

myGlobe brings you the world premiere of Friendster Mobile



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To accept a testimonial, text ACCEPT <testimonial#> to 2276

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You can also view your and your friends' profiles by going to the myGlobe WAP site. (Rate: ₱0.15/kb)

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IN MEMORY OF FPJ

Opens tomorrow: 8 of the year's best

THREE decades after it started, the Metro Manila Film Festival (MMFF) remains one of the most anticipated events of the Christmas season.

This year, the MMFF celebrates its 30th anniversary and promises to be even grander than its previous editions. It is held under the auspices of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority and is co-produced by the Manila Broadcasting Co.

Also this year, the MMFF is dedicated to the memory of the king of Philippine movies, Fernando Poe Jr.

Eight movies are in the festival, including four which are all said to be produced by Regal Films matriarch Lily Monteverde and whose inclusion was backed by no less than the Supreme Court. The eight movies will be shown in participating theaters nationwide from tomorrow, Christmas Day, to Jan. 7.

The best and brightest filmmakers, actors and actresses vie for recognition in the Film Festival Awards Night on Dec. 29 at the Aliw Theater at the CCP Complex.

The MMFF 2004 movie lineup represents some of the best that Philippine cinema has to offer this year:

Aishite Imasu 1941, Basfilm Productions.

This period drama takes place in the quiet town of San Nicolas in December 1941. A young woman, Inya (Judy Ann Santos), has just married her childhood sweetheart, Edilberto (Raymart Santiago). But the arrival of the Japanese throws the town into chaos.

In the midst of the occupation, a high-ranking Japanese officer named Ichiru (Jay Manalo) is drawn to Inya's best friend, the cross-dressing Ignacio (Dennis Trillo).

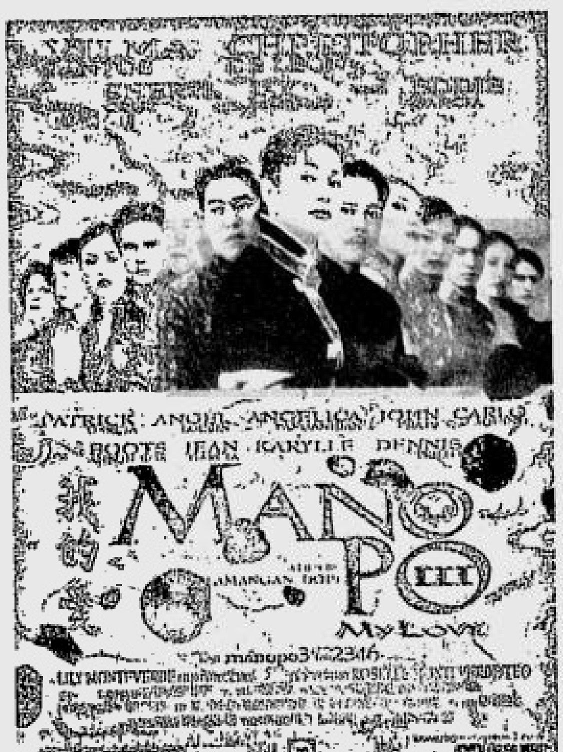
Edilberto, a guerrilla soldier whom Ignacio loves, convinces the cross-dresser to continue pretending to be a girl so she could have a relationship with Ichiru and pass information about the Japanese on to the Filipino rebels. But Inya is alarmed that Edilberto would put Ignacio in danger, and that her husband has been consumed by war and bloodlust.

It also stars Anita Linda, Jaclyn Jose, Angelu de Leon, Tony Mabesa, TJ Trinidad, Iya Villania, Marco Alcaraz and Yasmien Kurdi, and is directed by Joel Lamangan.

Enteng Kabisote (Okay Ka, Fairy Ko... The Legend!), Octoarts Films.

The popular 1980s fantasy TV series returns to the big screen as the Kabisote family goes back to the magical world of fairies and witches. In the battle between good and evil, Enteng (Vic Sotto) and his fairy wife Faye (Kristine Hermosa) are continuously nagged by the imperious fairy queen Ina Magenta (G Toengi).

Also starring Vic's real-life son Oyo Boy Sotto, who also plays his son in the movie. Directed by Tony Reyes.

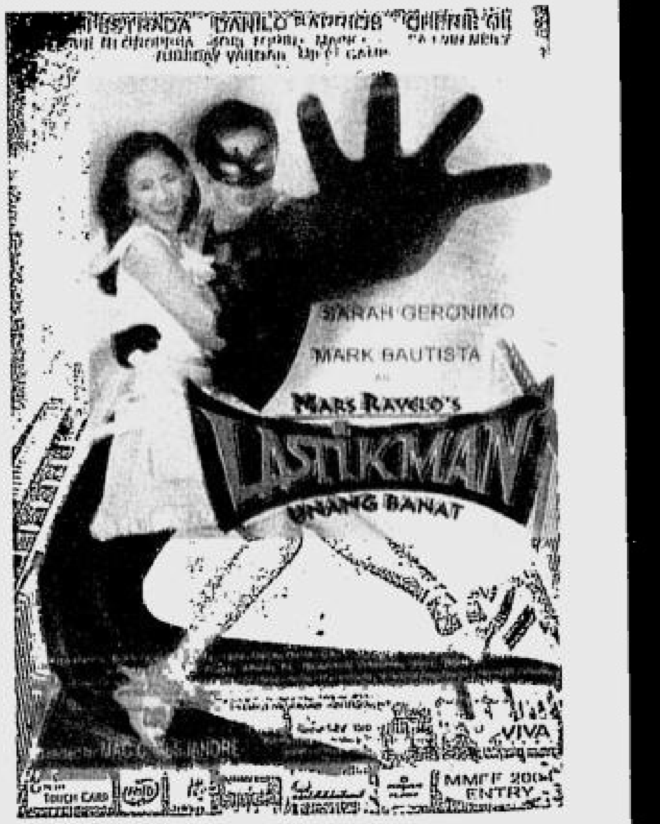

VILMA SANTOS
CHRISTOPHER DE LEON
MANO PO III
MY LOVE
LAMANGAN

Lastikman, Viva Productions Inc.

Lanky Adrian Rosales (Mark Bautista) is the unlikely hero of this film adaptation of Mars Ravelo's popular comic book character. After being beaten up by a group of illegal loggers, Adrian collapses against a rubber tree. The tree's strange fluid that heals Adrian's wounds and causes his body to become elastic like rubber.

With his newfound powers, Adrian vows to protect the people as the hero Lastikman.

Also starring Sarah Geronimo, Cherie Gil, John Estrada, Danilo Barrios, Elizabeth Oropesa, Joel Torre, Tuesday Vargas, Bearwin Melly and Mark Gil. Directed by Mac Alejandre.

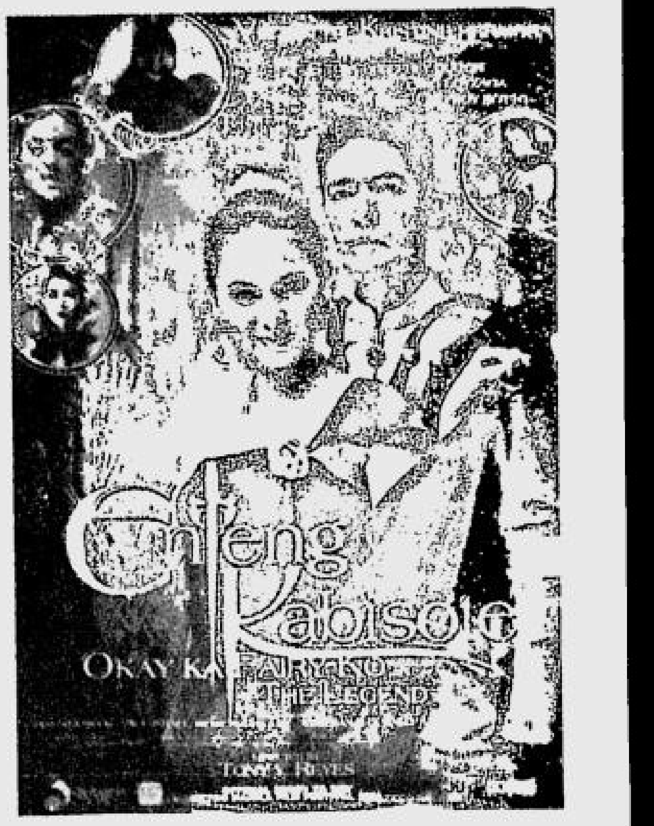

ESTRADA
DANILO BARRIOS
CHERIE GIL
SARAH GERONIMO
MARK BAUTISTA
MARS RAVELO'S
LASTIKMAN
UNANG BANAT
VIVA
MMFF 2004 ENTRY

Mano Po 3 (My Love), MAQ Productions Inc.

Best friends Lilia, Paul and Michael were student activists in the late '70s. Michael, Lilia's fiance, was captured by government men, forcing his family to give up their properties and businesses for his freedom. The family migrates to the US, leaving Lilia, who eventually marries Paul.

Fast-forward to the present: Lilia (Vilma Santos) is now an anti-crime crusader helping Chinoy *hulidap* victims. A person she once helped sends her on a trip abroad to thank her, and it is here that she meets Michael (Christopher de Leon) again. He follows her to the Philippines, scandalizing her children. Soon, Lilia's fidelity to her husband and clan is questioned.

Also starring Jay Manalo (again), Eddie Garcia, Boots Anson Roa, Jean Garcia, Karylle, Angel Locsin, Patrick Garcia, Dennis Trillo, Angelica Panganiban, John Prats and Carlo Aquino. Directed by Lamangan again.


Enteng Kabisote
OKAY KA FAIRY KO
THE LEGEND
TONY REYES

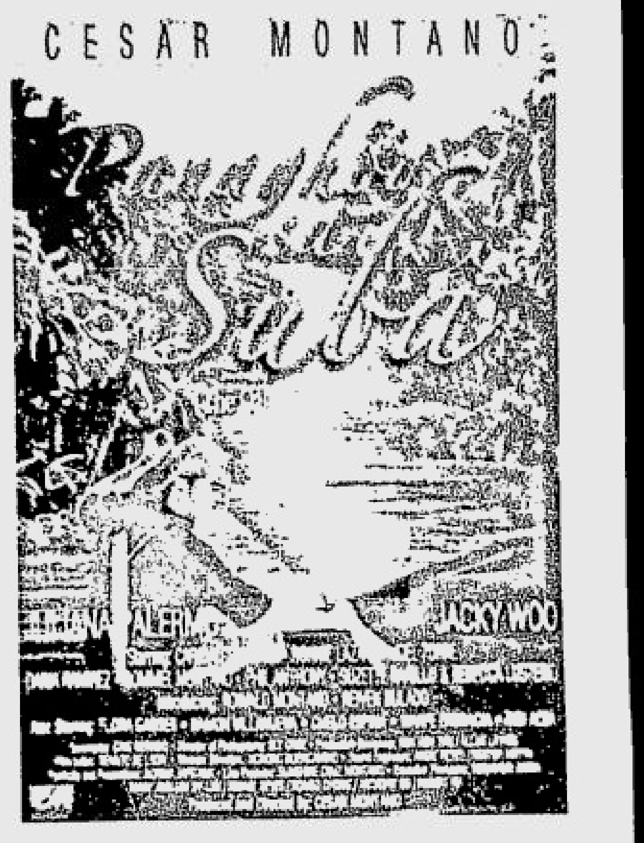
Panaghoy sa Suba, CM Films Inc.

The film, told mainly in Cebuano, takes place in a remote village in Central Visayas, also during the Japanese Occupation. Duroy (Cesar Montano) is attracted to Iset (Juliana Palermo) who, on account of her materialistic parents, draws suitors who might lift her out of poverty.

One suitor is her American employer, Smith; the other is Fumio Okohara (Jackie Woo), a Japanese officer who leads the Occupation troops in that area. Duroy joins a band of guerrillas and becomes their leader.

Iset, appalled by the brutality of the Japanese, also joins the guerrillas. She is tasked to help her comrades lay a trap for the Japanese and rescue villagers from a river prison.

Also starring Ronnie Lazaro, Daria Ramirez, Reiven Bolado, Rebecca Lusterio, Caridad Sanchez, Joel Torre, Rommel Montano, Ramon Villanueva and Suzette Ranillo. Directed by Cesar Montano, who is also the producer.

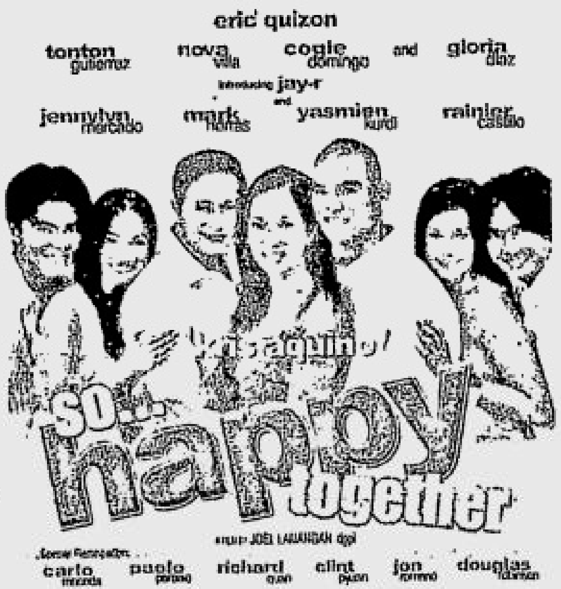

CESAR MONTANO
Panaghoy sa Suba
JACKY WOO

Sigaw, Megavision Films.

A battered wife and her jealous husband draw the concern and curiosity of their neighbor Marvin (Richard Gutierrez), who keeps hearing strange noises down the hall where the couple lives. As Marvin investigates, he uncovers a secret that changes his life and that of his girlfriend Pinky (Angel Locsin).

A series of hauntings follows Marvin and Pinky wherever they go, even after Marvin moves out of the apartment. Finally, he decides to confront the problem.

Also starring Jomari Yllana, Iza Calzado, James Blanco, Janella Denise Guevarra and Ronnie Lazaro. Directed by Yam Laranas.


eric quizon
tonton gutierrez
nova villa
cogie domingo
and gloria diaz
introducing jay-r
jennylyn mercado
mark herras
yasmien kurdi
rainier castillo
kris aquino
so... happy together
carlo maceda
paolo paraiso
richard quan
clint pijuan
jon romano
douglas robinson
JOEL LAMANGAN
Text HAPPY to 239

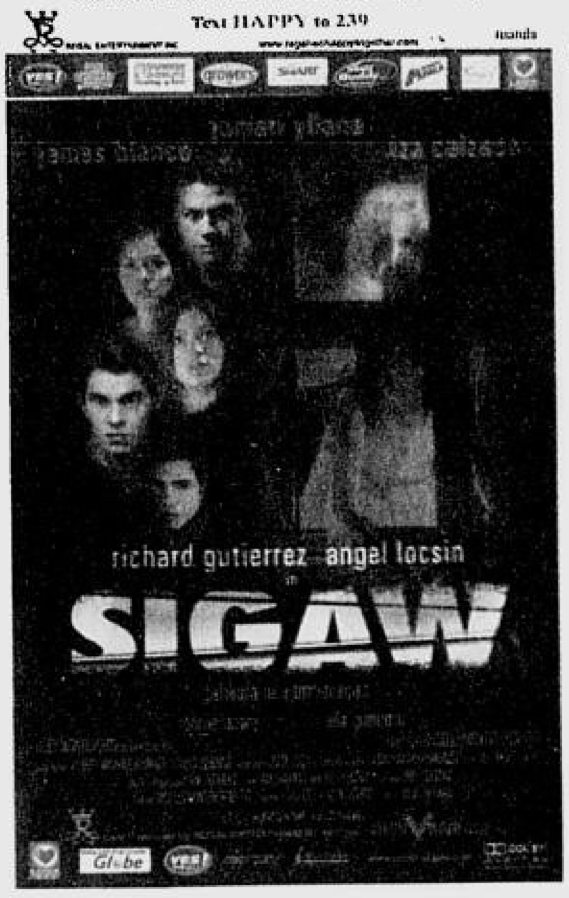
So Happy Together, Regal Entertainment Inc.

The dramatic comedy centers on the lives of two best friends looking for love: Lianne (Kris Aquino), a fast-talking businesswoman who can sell anyone anything, and Osmond (Eric Quizon), a gay copywriter who dreams of writing a best-selling novel.

Osmond is attracted to handsome, working-class men who treat him like an ATM. Lianne, on the other hand, finally meets the man of her dreams, marries and has two daughters. But her husband leaves her eventually.

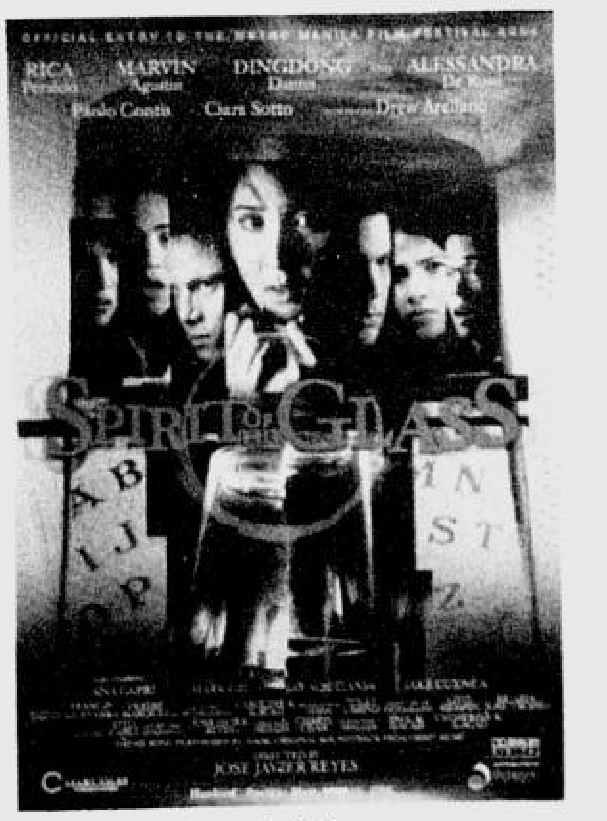
The Lamangan-directed movie sees the two best friends go through life, love and troubles from the time they are in their 20s until they are in their 60s.

Also starring Jay-R, Nova Villa, Gloria Diaz, Cogie Domingo, Carlo Maceda, Mark Herras, Jennylyn Mercado, Yasmien Kurdi, Rainier Castillo and Paolo Paraiso.


jomari yllana
james blanco
iza calzado
richard gutierrez
angel locsin
SIGAW
Globe

Spirit of the Glass, Canary Films.

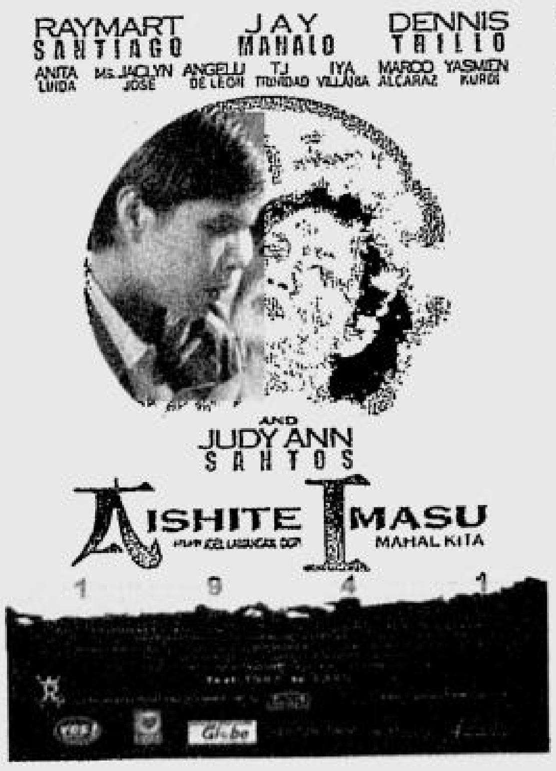
An aborted trip to Boracay forces Kelly and her friends to spend the Lenten break in her ancestral house in the province. There, Kelly's younger brother Aries and his friend TJ play Spirit of the Glass against the warnings of the old caretaker. They awaken a spirit who begs for help. The group tries to banish the spirit, to no avail, and the spirit haunts them.


OFFICIAL ENTRY TO THE METRO MANILA FILM FESTIVAL 2004
RICA PERALEJO
MARVIN AGUSTIN
DINGDONG DANTES
ALESSANDRA DE ROSSI
Paolo Contis
Ciara Sotto
Drew Arellano
SPIRIT OF THE GLASS
JOSE JAVIER REYES

Finally, a medium tells Kelly to return to the old house, confront the spirit and help it so it will return to its rest.

Starring Rica Peralejo, Marvin Agustin, Alessandra de Rossi, Dingdong Dantes, Paolo Contis, Drew Arellano, Ana Capri and Ciara Sotto. Directed by Jose Javier Reyes.

This year's film festival is sponsored by Smart, Tanduay, Hope, Colt 45, Kodak, Talk 'n' Text, Petron, Palmolive Naturals, Tuseran Syrup, Alaxan Gel and the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office.


RAYMART SANTIAGO
JAY MANALO
DENNIS TRILLO
ANITA LINDA
JACLYN JOSE
ANGELU DE LEON
TJ TRINIDAD
IYA VILLANIA
MARCO ALCARAZ
YASMIEN KURDI
AND JUDY ANN SANTOS
AISHITE IMASU
MAHAL KITA
1941
Globe

Don't rain on the MMFF 'Parade of Stars'

THE METRO Manila Development Authority (MMDA) and the Manila Broadcasting Co., co-producers of the Metro Manila Film Festival, issued a traffic advisory for the "Parade of Stars" today, 1-5 p.m., marking the official start of the 30th Metro Manila Film Festival.

The "Parade of Stars" will begin at the People Power Monument on Edsa and head north to Cubao.

It will turn right on P. Tuazon to Ali Mall, and cross Edsa again to Quezon Avenue. It turns left on Araneta Avenue, goes to Magsaysay Avenue in Sta. Mesa and proceeds to Quirino Avenue and on to Roxas Boulevard.

The parade then enters the CCP Complex and ends on Sotto Street in front of Aliw Theater at Star City at the CCP Complex.

Vehicular traffic at intersections covered by the parade route may be temporarily delayed to give way to the parade floats.

Aside from the parade, there will be Fans' Days, a Star Bazaar, an auction of show biz memorabilia, and a two-day Rock with the Stars street concert on Sotto Street in front of Aliw Theater.

SM CINEMA movietime

It's time to watch the year's most excellent films!

Catch the most awaited annual event in local film industry!

The 30th Metro Manila Film Festival 2004

Opens Dec. 25 at all SM Cinema

OPENS THIS WEEK

HE DOESN'T CARE IF YOU'RE NAUGHTY OR NICE

BAD SANTA
SUBJECT TO MTRCB RATING

This is the story of two criminals who disguise themselves as Santa Claus (Thornton) and his elf, traveling across the country to major malls, using the good will people have towards Santa to rob the stores blind. The plan is going great until the two baddies meet an introverted 8-year-old boy who reminds them of the true meaning of Christmas.

Now Showing at:

SM Manila • North Edsa • Megamall • Sta. Mesa • Southmall • Bicutan • Sucat

HAROLD & KUMAR
White Castle

HAROLD AND KUMAR
SUBJECT TO MTRCB RATING

Two likeable underdogs (John Cho & Kal Penn) for whom things never seem to go right, set out on a Friday night quest to satisfy their craving for White Castle hamburgers and end up on an epic journey of deep thoughts and deeper inhaling.

Now Showing at:

SM Manila • North Edsa • Megamall • Sta. Mesa • Southmall • Tutuban

HONEY
SUBJECT TO MTRCB RATING

This is the story of Honey (Alba), a tough sexy dancer from the inner city, who becomes a successful music video choreographer, a career which is threatened when her mentor makes her either sleep with him... or get blacklisted within the industry. She ultimately decides to pursue her lifelong dream of opening her own dance studio for inner-city youths.

Now Showing at:

SM Manila • North Edsa • Megamall • Sta. Mesa • Southmall • Tutuban

NOW SHOWING

THE PODIUM CINEMA

For Seat Reservation, call 633 8976
LATE NIGHT SCREENING
DURING FRIDAYS AND SATURDAYS

1. BRIDGET JONES 2
2. THE INCREDIBLES

METRO MANILA

sm megamall

1. POLAR EXPRESS
2. ALEXANDER
3. NATIONAL TREASURE
4. HAROLD AND KUMAR
5. BAD SANTA
6. BUNNYGUARDS
7. HELLWOLF
8. PASIYAM
9. HONEY
10. 2046
11. BRIDGET JONES 2
12. BIRTH

sm city fairview

1. BIRTH
2. BCUZ OF U
3. HAROLD AND KUMAR
4. ALEXANDER
5. BAD SANTA
6. PASIYAM
7. ONE MISSED CALL
8. NATIONAL TREASURE
9. HELLWOLF
10. NED KELLY
11. AFTER THE SUNSET
12. SHREK/ SHARKTALE

sm city manila

1. HONEY
2. HAROLD AND KUMAR
3. POLAR EXPRESS
4. ALEXANDER
5. BAD SANTA
6. NATIONAL TREASURE
7. BUNNYGUARDS
8. ONE MISSED CALL
9. PASIYAM
10. BCUZ OF U
11. GEORGE AND THE DRAGON
12. BRIDGET JONES 2

sm city sta. mesa

1. PASIYAM
2. BIRTH
3. ALEXANDER
4. HAROLD AND KUMAR
5. NATIONAL TREASURE
6. ONE MISSED CALL
7. BAD SANTA
8. NED KELLY
9. HONEY
10. BCUZ OF U

sm city southmall

1. BAD SANTA
2. HONEY
3. NATIONAL TREASURE
4. HAROLD AND KUMAR
5. BIRTH
6. NED KELLY
7. PASIYAM
8. ALEXANDER
9. BCUZ OF U
10. ONE MISSED CALL

sm city north edsa

1. ALEXANDER
2. BAD SANTA
3. PASIYAM
4. BIRTH
5. GEORGE AND THE DRAGON
6. HAROLD AND KUMAR
7. NATIONAL TREASURE
8. HONEY

sm cinema tutuban

1. HONEY
2. HAROLD AND KUMAR
3. PASIYAM
4. SHREK/ SHARKTALE

sm supercenter sucat

1. BAD SANTA
2. GEORGE AND THE DRAGON
3. NATIONAL TREASURE
4. BRIDGET JONES 2

sm city bicutan

1 GEORGE AND THE
2 DRAGON
3 BRIDGET JONES 2
4 BAD SANTA
NATIONAL TREASURE

Movies are subject to change without prior notice • For complete movie schedule, visit www.smcinema.com

CALL! DIAL 833-9999 FOR INFORMATION AND MOVIE LISTINGS, MTRCB RATINGS AND SCREENING SCHEDULES.

SURF! VISIT US AT www.smcinema.com FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE LATEST HAPPENINGS AT SM CINEMA.

AN SM CINEMA EXCLUSIVE

heroes for a day...
...for a lifetime...
THE BUNNYGUARDS

THE BUNNYGUARDS

NOW SHOWING
SM CITY MANILA
SM MEGAMALL

MTRCB Rating: G

SM Cinema unleashes Washington's scandal of the century. Through his connections to the underworld and for a huge amount of money, a Hamburg publisher succeeds in getting his hands on a tape with a recording of a secret and intimate conversation between the President and his intern. However, just prior to the big press conference, the revealing tape is accidentally exchanged with his daughter Nina's Japanese lessons tape who, unknowingly, flies with the evidence in her handbag to Munich. As soon as her father realizes what has happened, he tries to get the best bodyguards money can buy to protect her. However, thanks to the efforts of the German Secret Service and the CIA, both of which are eager to get their hands on the tape, Nina ends up with the two biggest goofs in town: Erkan and Stefan...

Catch The Bunnyguards only here at SM Cinemas! Watch how Erkan and Stefan get to be heroes for a day! See fantastic, unforgettable movies critics are raving about only here at SM Cinemas!

UpClose and Personal with the cast of
SPIRIT OF THE GLASS
Robinsons Movieworld GALLERIA - Cinema Lobby
December 28, 2004 (Tuesday) • 4:00PM

OFFICIAL ENTRY TO THE METRO MANILA FILM FESTIVAL 2004
RICA Peralejo
MARVIN Agustin
DINGDONG Dantes
ALESSANDRA De Rossi
Paolo Contis
Ciara Sotto
Drew Arellano
SPIRIT OF THE GLASS
DIRECTED BY JOSE JAVIER REYES

showing at ROBINSONS MOVIEWORLD BRANCHES

METRO MANILA Film Festival Week

DECEMBER 25 TO JANUARY 04

Don't miss the annual event In Local Film Industry this December

MMFF Entries:

Aishite Masu • Enteng Kabisote • Lastikman • Mano Po 3
Panaghoy sa Suba • Sigaw • Spirit of the Glass • So...Happy Together

Watch them all on December 25 at
ROBINSONS MOVIEWORLD

MMTA

METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION

MOVIE GUIDE

NOW SHOWING

SHANG CINEPLEX
Telephone: 633.2227 / 633.7851 loc. 17

PREMIERE THEATRE
(DOLBY) THE INCREDIBLES GP

1 (DOLBY)	NATIONAL TREASURE GP
2 (DOLBY)	BRIDGET JONES PG13
3 (DOLBY)	POLAR EXPRESS GP SHREK 2 GP
4 (DOLBY)	ALEXANDER R13

SUPER CINERAMA
isetann CINERAMA COMPLEX RECTO tel 733.4238

1. (DOLBY)	BAD SANTA
2.	HONEY
3.	RESERVED
4.	GEORGE & THE DRAGON
5.	SALAT

Gotesco Grand Central
(Caloocan) tel 364.3781

1	RESERVE
2	RESERVE
3	RESERVE
4 (SDDS)	RESERVE
5	RESERVE
6 (DOLBY)	RESERVE
7 (DTS)	RESERVE
8	RESERVE
9	RESERVE

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029

1	KALABIT
2	THE GRUDGE

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS)	U-BELT
2	KALABIT
3	BABY GENIUSES
4 (DTS)	ALEXANDER

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72

1 (DTS)	ONE MISSED CALL
2 (SDDS)	CHRISTMAS WITH A KRANKS
3 (DTS)	HONEY
4 (GOLD DTS)	BAD SANTA
5 (GOLD DOLBY)	HAROLD & KUMAR
6 (GOLD SDDS)	NATIONAL TREASURE
7 (GOLD DOLBY)	ALEXANDER
8 (DOLBY)	BCUZ OF U
9 (DTS)	SEED OF CHUCKY
10 (DOLBY)	THE INCREDIBLE

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 833.3274

1	HONEY
2	NED KELLY
3	KALABIT

MARKETPLACE
Mandaluyong tel 533.3851 / 533.3856

1	ALEXANDER
2	BABY GENIUSES
3	KALABIT
4	RESERVED

st★rmall Movies
www.clickthecity.com.ph (Las Pinas) tel (047) 237.7007

1 (DOLBY)	POLAR EXPRESS
2	SANTA SANTITA

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687.6963 or 72

1 (DOLBY)	THE POLAR EXPRESS
2 (DOLBY)	BRIDGET JONES DIARY 2
3 (DOLBY)	THE INCREDIBLES
4 (DOLBY)	SHREK 2

THE CENTER OF ENTERTAINMENT
Araneta Center ALI MALL CINEPLEX
Tel. 911-3101 loc. 8242 · 8281 · 8397

3 (Dolby)	ALEXANDER
4 (SDDS)	HAROLD & KUMAR
5 (DTS)	BAD SANTA
6 (Dolby)	HONEY
7 (Dolby)	BCUZ OF U

st★rmall Movies
www.clickthecity.com.ph (Mandaluyong) tel 724.4906

1	RESERVED
2	RESERVED
3	SANTA SANTITA
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX)	NED KELLY
5	SALAT SA LIGAYA

METROPOLIS st★r
www.clickthecity.com.ph (Alabang) tel 850.4285

1	OUT OF REACH
2	SALAT SA LIGAYA
3	HONEY
4	SANTA SANTITA
5 (DOLBY)	ALEXANDER
6	NATIONAL TREASURE

MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

Mowelfund MMFF subsidy should be increased

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

WE mentioned it in a recent article on the Metro Manila Film Festival, but some movie people want us to make a bigger deal out of it, so we now make it a point to stress: For this year's Metro Manila Film Festival (starting on Dec. 25), concerned leaders and members of the Filipino film industry shouldn't rest until the executive committee of the yearend film fest decides to *restore the cut made in its subsidy to the Movie Workers Welfare Foundation (Mowelfund).*

The cut was made when somebody snidely speculated that Mowelfund was being used as a *palabigasan* by a top industry leader turned politician. But people in the know swear that there is no truth to the sinister accusation.

The industry leader did *not* pilfer the welfare organization's funds for his personal use, because he knew that many needy film workers depended on it for medical, educational and other modes of assistance.

But government leaders chose to believe the nasty rumors, so the thousands of film workers who were Mowelfund beneficiaries became the ultimate victims of the cruel decision to cut Mowelfund's MMFF subsidy by half.

When this happened, we were alarmed, because we knew that many of our movie workers were in dire straits. So, we helped mount a media campaign to restore the cut, which was partially successful.

But our movie workers continue to suffer particularly at this time when so few films are being produced. So, we all have to call for the full restoration of Mowelfund's subsidy, starting with its share in the net income of the 2004 Metro filmfest.

Even better, Mowelfund's share should be *increased*, because while the MMFF's other beneficiaries are important, the welfare of our film workers should be our paramount concern.

It's no exaggeration to say that quite a number of them are suffering terribly these days, so the industry has to come to their aid, and even more funds for Mowelfund is the best way to do this.

Due to the cut made in the industry welfare organization's MMFF subsidy, Mowelfund head Boots Anson-Roa has thought up innovative ways to generate more money for our movie workers. But the MMFF is still the group's main source of funds, so the members of the festival's executive committee should do the right thing and help them when they need it most.

Many of them are leaders of the movie industry, so they should have our film workers' welfare in mind, and at heart. If they increase Mowelfund's subsidy, we'll know that they really do care, and we'll

MOWELFUND/A3-3

Mowelfund MMFF subsidy...

From page A3-2

thank them profusely. If they don't, 2005 will be an even bleaker year for our suffering movie workers and their families.

Everybody's help is needed in this campaign. If you agree that our movie workers should be helped by industry leaders who profess to love and care for them, let your voice be heard in the media. And call Mowelfund and the industry's decision makers to express your support and find out what more you can do. Our movie workers thank you!

Movies on TV

ON HBO, Dec. 24 at 8 a.m., "Frances." 10:15 a.m., "Hysterical Blindness." 1:30 p.m., "Clueless." 4:45 p.m., "The Mirror Has Two Faces." 9 p.m., "The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers."

On Cinemax, Dec. 24 at 8 a.m., "Jason and the Argonauts." 10:35 p.m., "The Life of David Gale."

Merry Christmas!

HAVE a happy, holy Christmas, one and all! Let's thank God for all of the gifts he's bestowed on us, especially the gift of His own Son, the child Jesus, who tonight opens his tiny arms to take all of us into his loving embrace of innocence and peace.

POWER PLANT CINEMA
Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND•EX

POLAR EXPRESS GP 1:30,3:30,5:30 ALEXANDER R13 7:15	NATIONAL TREASURE GP 12:10,2:40,5:10,7:40	BRIDGET JONES PG13 12:40,3.00,5:20,7:40
HAROLD AND KUMAR R13 12:00,2:00,4:00,6:00,8:00	SHARK TALE GP 12:30,5:00 INCREDIBLES GP 2:30,7:00	BAD SANTA R13 1:25,3:35,5:45,7:55

MATINEE SCREENINGS BEFORE 5:00 P.M. : P80.00 : MON. - FRI.

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star group of cinemas movie guide
IN DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND

starmall EDSA-SHAW
Tel. No. 726.61.50
3 Santa Santita
4 Ned Kelly
5 Salat sa Ligaya

METROPOLIS ALABANG star
Tel. No. 850.42.85
1 Out of Reach
2 Salat sa Ligaya
3 Honey
4 Santa Santita
5 Alexander
6 National Treasure

starmall LAS PIÑAS
Tel. No. 873.50.04
1 Polar Express
2 Santa Santita

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For movie schedules visit www.clickthecity.com !

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For inquiries, call:
687-6963
GUARANTEED SEATS
MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

1 THE POLAR EXPRESS
12:35, 3:05, 5:35
8:05, 10:35
GP

2 BRIDGET JONES DIARY 2
10:30, 12:50, 3:20,
5:50, 8:20, 10:50
PG-13

3 THE INCREDIBLES
11:20, 2:05, 4:50,
7:35, 10:30
GP

4 HAROLD & KUMAR
11:50, 2:30, 5:10
7:50, 10:30
R 13

THEATRE MALL GREENHILLS
a landmark reinvented!
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND•EX
NOW SHOWING

CINEMA 1
BAD SANTA
11:10, 1:20, 3:30, 5:40, 7:50, 10:10
P13

CINEMA 2
HAROLD & KUMAR
12:15, 2:25, 4:35, 6:45, 8:55
R13

TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.
GREENHILLS SHOPPING CENTER, ORTIGAS AVENUE, GREENHILLS, SAN JUAN, METRO MANILA • 7224496

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In Celebration of
the Filipino Filmmaker's Creativity
we present the

2004
MetroManila Filmfest
in Cinemas 1 to 4
December 26, 2004 to January 7, 2005

• MANO PO 3 • ENTENG KABISOTE
AISHITE IMASU 1941 • SPIRIT OF THE GLASS

① NATIONAL TREASURE
FS 11:20AM, 2:00PM
LMF 4:40PM (GP)

② BRIDGET JONES 2
FS 11:45AM, 2:15PM,
LMF 4:45PM (PG-13)

③ POLAR EXPRESS
FS 11:30AM, 2:00PM
LMF 4:30PM (GP)

④ ALEXANDER
FS 12:15PM
LMF 3:30PM (R-13)

PREMIERE THEATRE INCREDIBLES
FS 11:35 AM 2:05PM LMF 4:35PM (GP)

Regular Ticket Price
Cinema 1 to 4 P150
Premiere Theatre [illegible] includes [illegible] popcorn and drinks

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or 633-7851 loc. 171

Shangri-La Plaza

Araneta Center LEISURE GUIDE

GATEWAY CINEPLEX 10
MOVIE-GOING LIKE NO OTHER
ALL THEATERS • ULTRA SOUND • FULL STADIUM SEATING
Gateway Cineplex*10
LEVEL 4, GATEWAY MALL
NOW OPEN!

1 HAROLD AND KUMAR 1:40 4:20 7:00 9:40
2 NATIONAL TREASURE 12:25 3.10 5:55 8:40
3 INCREDIBLES 12:30 2:30 4:40 6:50 9:00
4 BRIDGET JONES 12:30 2:30 4:40 6:50 9:00

Opens Soon!
CINEMAS 5,6,7,8,9 & 10

ALI MALL CINEMAS
3 Dolby ALEXANDER 12:00 2:50 5:40 8:30
4 SDDS HAROLD & KUMAR 1:00 3:40 6:20 9:00
5 dts BAD SANTA 12:15 2:25 4:35 6:45 8:55
6 Dolby HONEY 12:15 2:25 4:35 6:45 8:55
7 Dolby BCUZ OF U 12:00 2:10 4:20 6:30 8:40

ARANETA COLISEUM
Disney On Ice PRINCESS
SHOWTIME
Dec. 25 Sat 1pm 4:30pm 8pm
Dec. 26 Sun 2pm 6pm
Dec. 27 Mon 2pm 6pm
Dec. 28 Tue 6pm
Dec. 29 Wed 2pm 6pm
Dec. 30 Thu 2pm 6pm
Jan. 1 Sat 1pm 4:30pm 8pm
Jan. 2 Sun 2pm 6pm
Jan. 3 Mon 6pm
For tickets, call TicketNet at 911-5555

NEW FIESTA CARNIVAL
OPEN DAILY
Mon-Fri 2pm to 10pm
Sat-Sun & Hol. 10am to 11pm

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	SEX BOMB / RAMPADORA
ODEON	X-MEN 2
ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN
ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY LEGEND / [illegible]
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	SALAT SA LIGAYA
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	BERTUD NG PUTIK
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	SALAT SA LIGAYA
B	CLOSED
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA 1 2 3 & 4	NATIONAL TREASURE / BRIDGET JONES / SPIDERMAN 2 / SHREK 2
PREMIERE THEATRE	THE INCREDIBLES
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	KALABIT
CINEMA-2	SALA'
CINEMA-3	ONE MISSED CALL
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	POLAR EXPRESS
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-6	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-7	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-8	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	HAROLD & KUMAR
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	ALEXANDER
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	BAD SANTA
CINEMA-12	NATIONAL TREASURE
CINEMA-14	HONEY
CINEMA-15	B'CUZ OF U
LORES	
CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN	
(LAS PIÑAS)	NATIONAL TREASURE
CINEMA-1	PASIYAM
CINEMA-2	BRIDGET JONES
CINEMA-4	POLAR EXPRESS
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARAÑAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA

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• METRO MANILA CINEMAS •

GALLERIA 632-9115/16
1 ALEXANDER • THX 11:30 3:00 6:30 10:00
2 HAROLD AND KUMAR 11:10 1:20 3:30 5:40 7:50 10:00
3 NED KELLY 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00
4 BRIDGET JONES 2 12:10 2:40 5:10 7:40 10:00
5 BIRTH 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10.00
6 NATIONAL TREASURE 11:00 1.45 4:30 7:15 10:00
7 SEED OF CHUCKY 11:00 1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50
8 HONEY 11:10 1:20 3:30 5:40 7:50 10:00
9 BAD SANTA 11:35 1:40 3:45 5:50 7:55 10:00
10 GEORGE AND THE DRAGON 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12
1 NATIONAL TREASURE 10:20 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00
2 BAD SANTA 10:15 12:15 2:15 4:20 6:25 8:30 10:00
3 GEORGE AND THE DRAGON 10.15 12:15 2:15 4:20 6:25 8:30 10:00
4 PA-SIYAM 10:35 12:50 3:05 5:20 7:35 9:50
5 SEED OF CHUCKY 10:30 12:25 2.20 4:15 8:05 10:00
6 HONEY 11.10 1.10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50
7 HAROLD AND KUMAR 10:20 12:15 2:10 4:05 6:00 7:55 9:50

METRO EAST 682-8193/99 • 682-8280
1 SEED OF CHUCKY 10:50 12:50 2.50 4:50 6:50 9:00
2 ALEXANDER 12:30 3:30 6:30 9:30
3 SHREK 2 11:50 1:45
BRIDGET JONES 2 3:55 6:25 9:00
4 THE POLAR EXPRESS 10:50 12:50 2:50
2046 4:50 7:05 9:20
5 HONEY 11:50 2:10 4:30 6:50 9:10
6 NATIONAL TREASURE 12:20 3:15 6:10 9:05
7 HAROLD AND KUMAR 11:50 2:10 4:30 6:50 9:10
8 BAD SANTA 11:10 1.40 4 10 6:40 9:10

NOVALICHES 935-3229/31
1 ALEXANDER 10:40 1:50 5:00 8:15
2 NATIONAL TREASURE 10.30 1.00 3.30 6.00 8.30
3 BIRTH 11.00 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 8:55
4 THE POLAR EXPRESS 10:30 12:30 2:30
2046 4.35 6:50 9.00
5 NANG NAK 11:00 1:00 3.00 5:00 7.00 8:55
6 SHREK 2 11:00 1:00 3:00 5:00 6:50 8:30
7 SEED OF CHUCKY 11:00 1:00 3:00 5:00 7.00 8:55
8 THE INCREDIBLES 11:00 1:10
ONE MISSED CALL 3:30 5:50 8:30

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PIONEER 687-5378
1 ALEXANDER 11.00 2:20 5:40 9:00
2 THE INCREDIBLES 11:10 1:30 3:50 6:10 8:30
3 NATIONAL TREASURE 12:40 3:20 6:00 8:40
4 BAD SANTA 10:35 12:40 2:45 4:50 6:55 9:00

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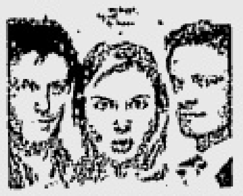
1 BCUZ OF U 11:10 1:30 3:50 6:10 8:30
2 NATIONAL TREASURE 10:30 1:15 3:40 6:05 8:30
3 ALEXANDER 11:00 2:10 5:20 8:30
4 THE POLAR EXPRESS 11:45 1:55 4:05 6:15 8.30

CAINTA 240-4661
1 ALEXANDER 11:00 2.00 5.00 8.00
2 HAROLD AND KUMAR 11:00 1:20 3:40 6:00 8:20
3 HONEY 11:00 1:20 3:40 6:00 8:20
4 NATIONAL TREASURE 11:15 2:10 5:05 8:00

BRIDGET JONES THE EDGE OF REASON

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Schwarzeneggers accused of lying about sale of moldy mansion

SHOW STOPPER

LOS ANGELES—California's action star governor, Arnold Schwarzenegger, has been sued by a lawyer who claims the muscle man lied about the state of a moldy mansion he sold her for nearly $8 million.

"True Lies" star Schwarzenegger and his Kennedy heiress wife Maria Shriver covered up the damage to the estate's pool and tennis court and also hid a mould problem in the house's film screening room, the lawsuit alleged.

Lawyer Susan Loggans claims that the ultra-rich Schwarzeneggers minimized the damage to the house in the ritzy Los Angeles district of Pacific Palisades, which she bought from them in September.

SCHWARZENEGGER

The suit, filed before the LA Superior Court earlier this month, alleges that the first couple failed to disclose significant "construction defects" before the Sept. 28 sale.

"Despite the fact that the Schwarzeneggers had actual knowledge of the property defects, they chose not to provide such information in a complete and forthright manner," the suit claimed.

"Instead the Schwarzeneggers made vague and incomplete references to serious and hidden defects on the property for the purpose of disguising the real and serious defects they knew existed, the disclosure of which would either have changed the economics of the sale or defeated it entirely," the lawyer's suit added.

Loggans, who accuses the "Terminator" actor-turned-politician and his wife Shriver of three counts of fraud, did not specify an amount for damages.

Instead, she is instead seeking a court order referring the dispute to an arbitrator. *AFP*

IS HER SON A CHILD OF 'GENIUS OF SOUL'

Ray Charles ex-mistress grilled over sex history

LOS ANGELES—An ex-mistress of Ray Charles agreed Tuesday to be grilled by lawyers over her sexual history in a bid to establish whether her 17-year-old son is really the late soul legend's child.

Unemployed Mary Anne den Bok, however, told a court Tuesday that she regretted asking for a 20-fold increase in child support payments from Charles' estate to at least $60,000 a month from $3,000 previously.

The questioning under oath comes after Mary Anne den Bok sued Charles' estate in August in a bid to boost child support payments for her son Corey by 20-fold to keep him in the style to which he was accustomed.

She had claimed that the $3,000 monthly stipend that the executor of Charles' estate, Joe Adams, began paying when the singer died was "vastly inadequate and insufficient" to pay Corey's expenses.

Den Bok agreed in Los Angeles Superior Court on Tuesday to answer intimate questions on Jan. 4 at the offices of lawyers for Charles' estate, which had asked Judge Thomas Stoever to compel her to testify.

The estate's executor is questioning whether Charles actually fathered Corey, even though the boy is listed in his will as a son.

The "Genius of Soul" Charles died of liver disease on June 10 at the age of 73.

Den Bok told the court she felt "humiliated" by previous questioning on the subject of her sex life and said she had had second thoughts about making a request for a 20-fold increase in child support.

"I sincerely regret, in my initial petition, that I made the exorbitant request [for raising child support]) that I did," Den Bok said.

"My sexual history, for the past 21 years, has been that I had no sexual relations with anyone other than [Charles]," she added.

In her August petition, Den Bok asked for a minimum of $60,000 a month to support her son and return to him "the lifestyle he enjoyed" before Charles' final illness.

According to Den Bok, Charles' estate is worth about $100 million and is expected to have a net annual income from royalties and publishing rights of about $25 million this year and again in 2005.

Den Bok alleged that the boy was entitled to "a lifestyle commensurate with [Charles'] tremendous wealth, continuing enormous income and privileged station in life."

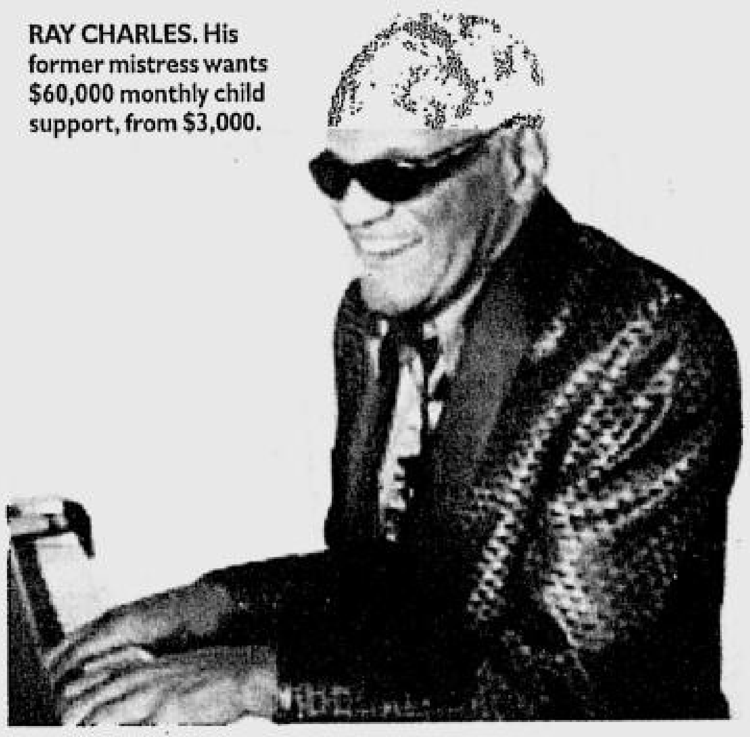
In her petition, Den Bok also alleges that an attorney for Adams, who was Charles' longtime manager, "falsely and wrongfully claim[ed]) that an issue exists in this litigation concerning ... paternity."

A further court hearing in the case has been set for Jan. 10.

Since his death, Charles has enjoyed renewed popularity with his final album of duets, "Genius Loves Company," going platinum and picking up a total of 10 Grammy nominations earlier this month.

His life has been immortalized in Taylor Hackford's film "Ray," for which actor Jamie Foxx is strongly tipped to win a best actor Oscar nomination when they are announced next month. - *AFP*

RAY CHARLES. His former mistress wants $60,000 monthly child support, from $3,000.



HARRISON Ford in tale of battle for Falluja

First war drama on Iraq war to star Harrison Ford

LOS ANGELES—Producers at Universal Pictures are developing what would be Hollywood's first feature film about the war in Iraq, with actor Harrison Ford ready to portray a US general in the movie, the studio said on Friday.

The combat drama would be based on the upcoming book "No True Glory," an account of the battle for Falluja by Bing West, a Marine veteran and former US assistant defense secretary now covering the war as a foreign correspondent, a studio spokesman said.

A Universal-based production company, Double Features, recently optioned movie rights to the book, which will be adapted by West and his son, Owen, a veteran Marine rifleman. The book is due out in May.

Although Ford, 62, is "attached" to the project—Hollywood parlance for a loose commitment to star in the film if it gets made—he is not under contract, the studio said.

And Universal has only given the go-ahead for development of a screenplay. No money has been earmarked for production yet.

Ford's best known roles include the swaggering "Star Wars" space hero Han Solo and the rugged adventurer Indiana Jones in the "Raiders of the Lost Ark" series.

In "No True Glory" he would play Maj. Gen. James Mattis, the US Marine commander ordered to lead an assault on the Iraqi city of Falluja, an insurgent stronghold west of Baghdad, after four Americans contractors were killed and mutilated there by a mob in March 2004.

The offensive was halted the following month, and the Marines were withdrawn until US forces renewed their assault on the Sunni Muslim city following the American presidential election in November.

While Ford would play a lead role in the film, the movie is envisioned as a broader look at the conflict in Falluja as a study of the connections between war and politics as seen through the eyes of the troops, their commanders and civilian leaders, said Universal.

The Michael Moore documentary "Fahrenheit 9/11," which focused on US conduct of the war in Iraq, was a major box-office success, but "True Glory" would be the first feature drama about the war. Several Iraq war projects are being developed for TV, including a pilot series from "NYPD Blue" co-creator Steven Bochco titled "Over There" for the FX cable channel. *Reuters*

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'Disney on Ice' opens tomorrow

SHOW TIME

CELEBRATE Christmas with Disney's seven princesses in this year's "Disney on Ice" at the Araneta Coliseum starting tomorrow, Christmas Day.

For its 23rd edition, "Disney on Ice" has created its largest, most intricate setting—a three-story, breathtaking castle that twists, turns and transforms to bring seven royal Disney fairy tales to life.

Disney's most memorable princesses—Cinderella, Jasmine, Ariel, Sleeping Beauty, Belle, Mulan and Snow White—appear together in a live production for the first time in Manila.

Dive into an undersea party with Arielle and Prince Eric in "The Little Mermaid." Escape on a magic carpet ride with Jasmine and Aladdin.

Enter the enchanted forest with Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs.

Journey to ancient China with Mushu to help brave Mulan fulfill her destiny.

Make magic with Flora to help save Sleeping Beauty.

Rejoice as Belle's love turns The Beast into a fine-looking prince in "Beauty and the Beast."

Go back to the 18th century to witness how a handsome prince fell in love with the beautiful Cinderella.

"Disney on Ice presents Princess Classics" will also have performances on Dec. 26, 27, 28, 29 and 30 and Jan. 1, 2 and 3.

Tickets for P1,215 (VIP), P1,000 (Patron/Lower Box), P790 (Upper Box A Premium), P580 (Upper Box A), P320 (Upper Box B) and P105 (General Admission) are available at all SM Ticketnet outlets and at the Araneta Box-Office.

"Disney on Ice presents Princess Classics" is presented by Gateway Mall and Globe Gizmo Prepaid. It is sponsored by Petron Treats, AIG Credit Cards, The Richmonde Hotel as the show's official residence, Walt Disney Home Entertainment, Manila Bulletin, Philippine Journalists Inc., Asian Business Cable Holdings Inc., (AVCH), Phone-A-Car, ABS-CBN, Studio 23, MYX and Lifestyle, with dwRR, 99.5RT, Magic 89.9, 103.5 K-Lite, Jam 88.3, and Wave 89.1.

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December 23, 2004
Philippine Symphonic Band
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STARS' CHOICE Singing champions (from left) Rachelle Ann Go, Christian Bautista and Mark Bautista are among the celebrities who prefer Skechers. Endorsed by pop star Christina Aguillera, Skechers footwear is is available all over the country. Skechers Time is offered in all Fusion Concept shops and at SM Department Store branches in Megamall, Manila, Makati, Southmall, Pampanga, Harrison Plaza, Sta. Mesa, North Edsa, and Dasmariñas.